Diaboros Live

アトリ抄

五

田代琢也

Atori is part human and part diaboros.
She is working as a diaboros buster
part time to support herself.
She is fighting her destiny
with the help of her friends.

MFコミックス

MEDIA VI FACTORY

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メディアファクトリー
MEDIA VI FACTORY

人間と妖鬼のハーフ、柴馬アトリ。
幼い頃の記憶をなくした彼女は
人に仇なす妖怪を退治することを生業としていた。
始めは心を閉ざしていたアトリだが
人間と妖鬼の多くの友人に支えられ
次第に自分の持って生まれた運命と
向き合えるようになって行った。
突如、妖鬼の世界にさらわれた
アトリだったが
かつて彼女を斬ったツルギや
敵だったものの
身を挺してアトリを救った
ドウセツの助けを得て
ついに三賢の長・夜仰の下に到着した。

MFコミックス

好評発売中

刀神妖緋伝 1～7巻 新谷かおる
ドラゴン株式会社 新谷かおる
エリア88 全13巻 新谷かおる
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アタゴオル 全7巻 ますむら・ひろし
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COBRA -黒竜王- 寺沢武一
悪魔城ドラキュラ 闇の呪印 1～2巻 佐々倉コウ
三国志群雄伝 火鳳燎原 1～4巻 陳某
曹操孟徳正伝 1～3巻 大西巷一
STOP 劉備くん!(続・続続) 全3巻 白井恵理子
GO GO 玄徳くん!!(続・続続) 全3巻 白井恵理子
関羽、出陣! 烏崎譲
戦国BASARA 乱世乱舞 全3巻 霜月かいり
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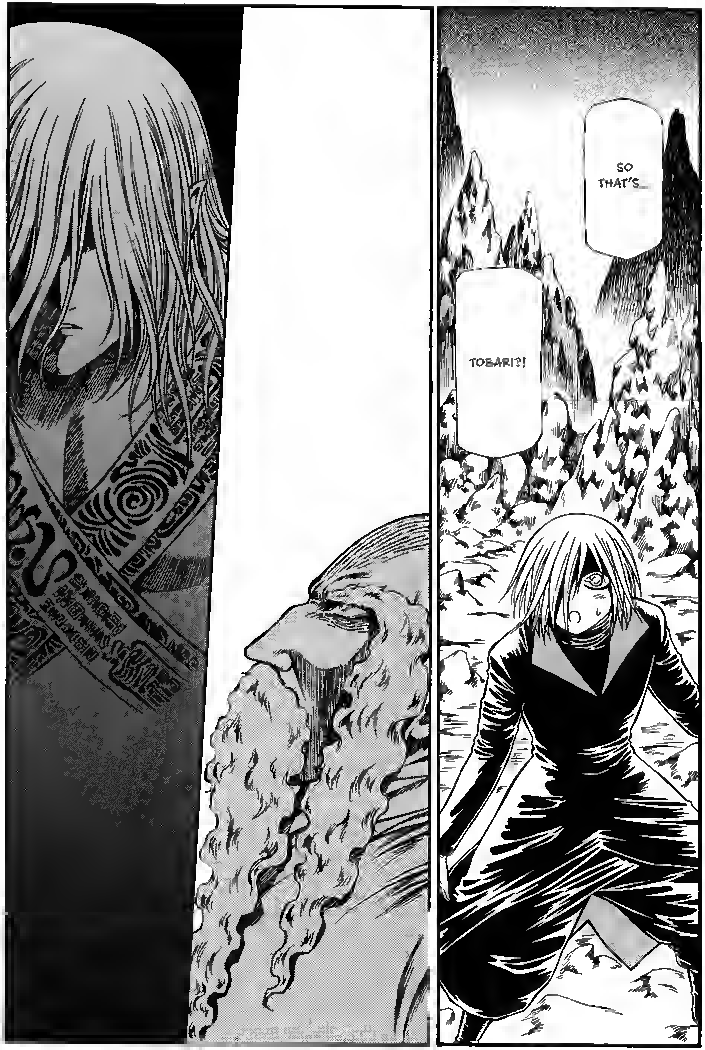
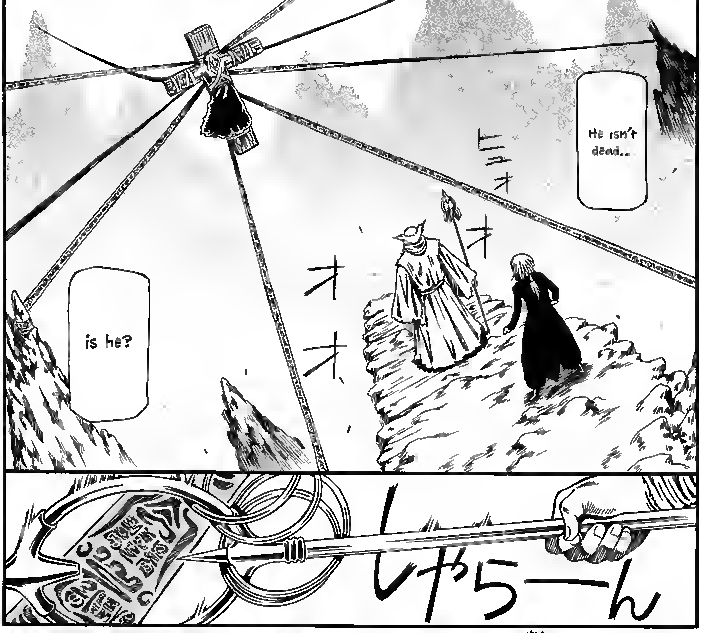
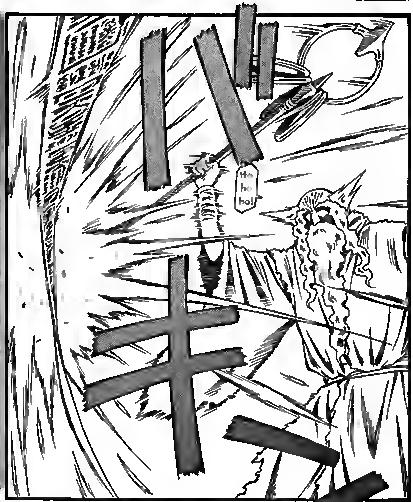

SO THAT'S...
TOBARI?!

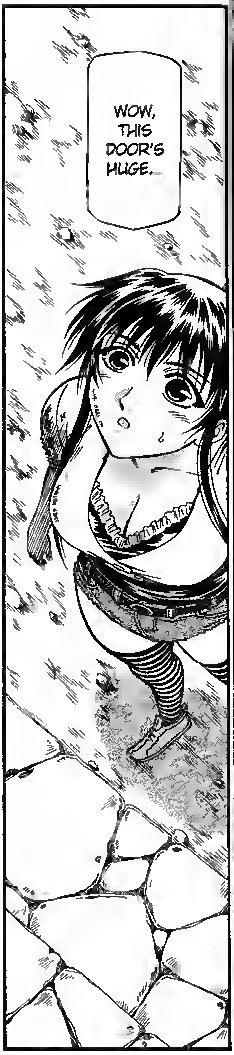

He isn't dead...
is he?
ヒョオ
オオ
しゃらーん

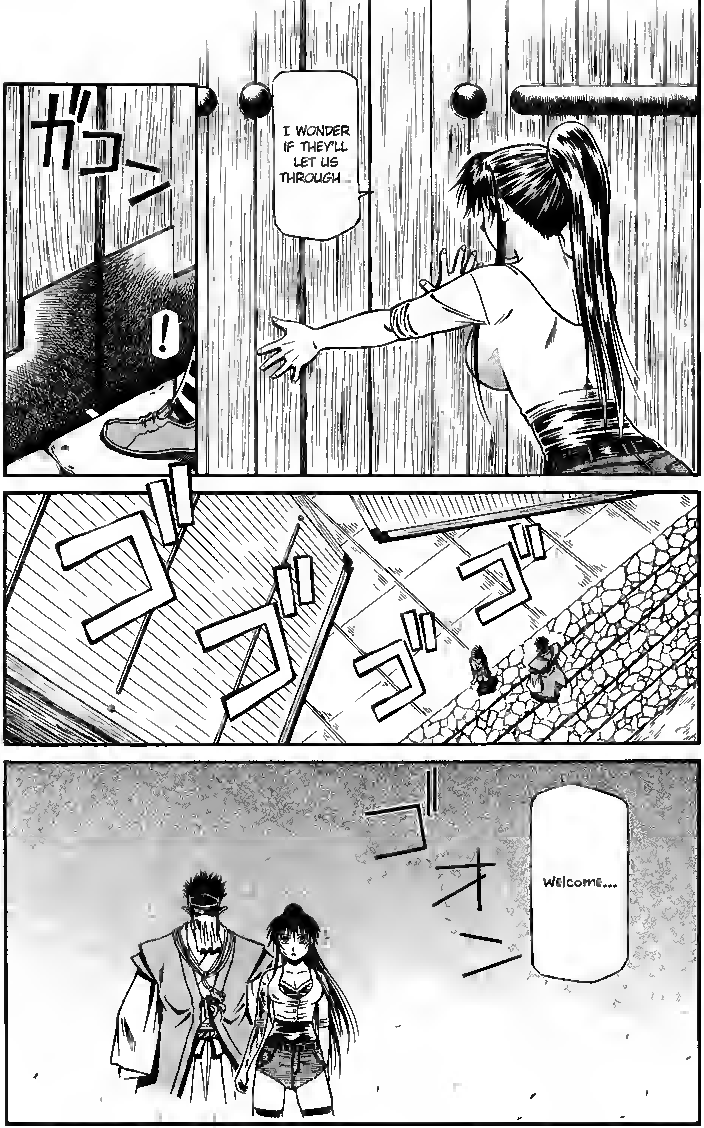
No, You merely sealed him!
The tape surrounding him prevents him from making the slightest of move...


IN
He is bait
キ

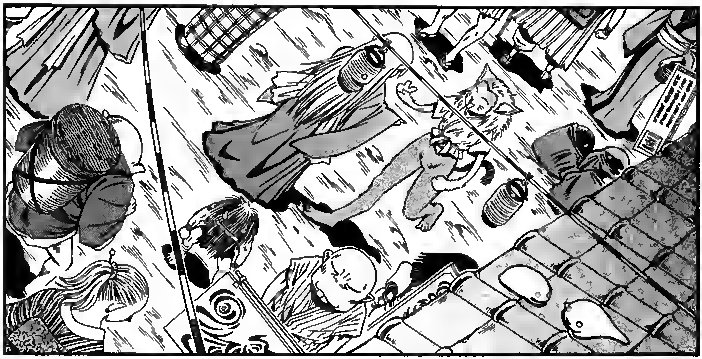
It looks like the talismans used by humans..
Yagiou and I have a lot of experience..
and we know more than one way of sealing a demon..
Heh heh heh..
I can see how curiosity may have pushed this young man to follow you...
!!
But you, Senkiou... shouldn't you know better...
... than to drag your old bones all the way here?

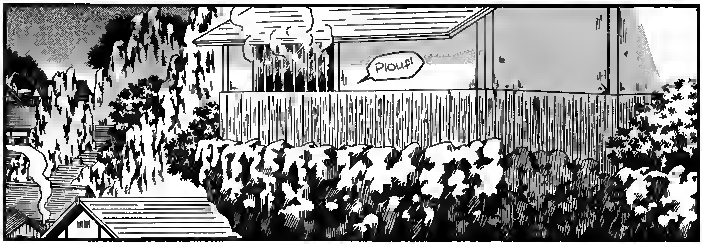
CHAPTER 21: YAGIOU

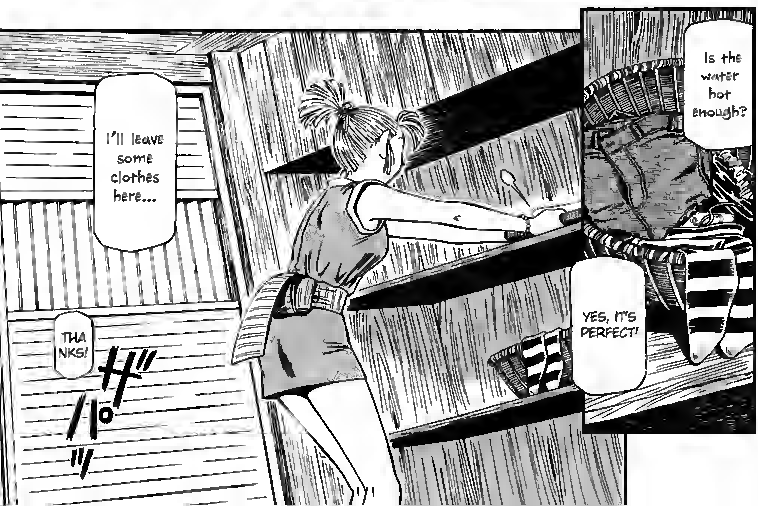

WOW, THIS DOOR'S HUGE...


ガラーン
!
I WONDER IF THEY'LL LET US THROUGH...
ゴゴゴゴゴゴ
ゴオン
WELCOME...

...Atori, daughter of the Tenshu!
So that's Yagiou, the venerable sage...




Plouf!


Is the water hot enough?
YES, IT'S PERFECT!
I'll leave some clothes here...
THANKS!

Waaah! What's with this?! Your clothes are all bloody!
Are you hurt?
JUST A FEW SCRATCHES!
SMash
The water here has numerous healing qualities. It will do you good!
I'll have a look at your injuries later!
I may not look like it, but I'm an apprentice doctor.
I still can't believe it....
Tlap!
Tlap!
OH REALLY?!

You're the Tenshu's daughter, right?
My master greatly respects your mother...
Can't blame him - she's the boss of all demons!
And on top of all, you're half-human, half-demon, right?
That is so cool!
Yep! Really cool!
Is she a kid or what?!
Hey, tell me, the guy who came with you...
MITSU-RUGI?
Oh, is that his name? Anyway, I really like him...
Honestly, I'm head over heels!

I feel all funny inside
that cuts like a sword's blade!
He's got this aura of death around him...
Our master's got nothing on him...
I NEVER NOTICED...
You're still just a kid, aren't you?
What?!
Well, anyway...
Call me when you're done!
I'll bring you to master...
Thanks...
Step!

.....
Zrik! Zrik!
STILL NO STRENGTH IN MY LEFT ARM...
Ha ha ha! Good meal!
But in the end he was the one with 100 legs!
Master, i've brought you your guest...
Very well, have her enter!
Come, Come!

Later...
YES
Come closer...
Were you able to relax a bit?
YES
I BENEFITED FROM YOUR WONDERFUL HOT SPRINGS...
I'm glad...

ミシッ
Here's the culprit...
Pop!
First, allow me to apologize for the unfortunate misunderstanding...
...that has caused you so many headaches.
MISUNDERSTANDING?
HEY! HE'S THE ONE...
...WHO DRAGGED ME INTO THE DEMON WORLD!
HEH HEH
I did indeed ask that you be brought here, but not without all the respect a person of your status would require.
Instead, you were savagely attacked by a two-horned monster.
All because of this brainless idiot...
HEH HEH

SO YOU DIDN'T
SEND THOSE INVISIBLE CREATURES AT US
DOUSETSU DIDN'T LIE
Douset-su?
!
Ah... I see...
He was part of the group I sent to fetch you...
Indeed, I had nothing to do with the crea-tures you speak of...

They must have been what we here refer to as "Errant Demons"...
.....
YAGIOU... THERE'S A QUESTION I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU.
Please go ahead....
WHY DID YOU LEAVE THE NUE?
MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHY DID YOU BREAK TOBARI'S SEAL AND LEAD HIM AWAY?
Shit!

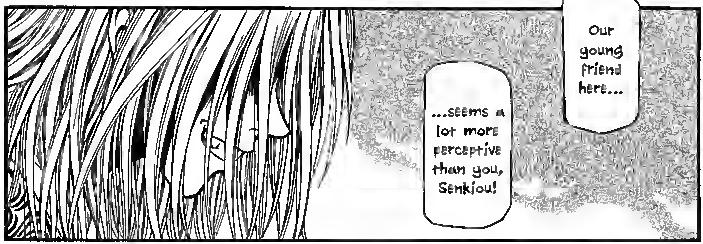
I merely moved him to a mountainous region called the "Demon's Chin"...
...to seal him there anew...
for the Tenshu's power...
...grows weaker by the day...
it is on the verge of disappearing...
I only left the N.U.E....
SO MY MOTHER HAVING A CHILD WITH A HUMAN...
because I doubt demons...
... are able to trust in a human being...
...AND THE HYBRID FRUIT OF THEIR UNION BECOMING THE NEXT TENSHU WAS NOT TO THEIR LIKING?

From where I stand, I could no longer allow the situation to deteriorate any further.
Even amongst the most faithful, certain individuals are indeed starting to hold this belief.
I was only left with the option of quitting the N U E...
to avoid the eventual split!
BUT THERE'S NO GUARANTEE I'LL BE THE NEXT TENSHU...

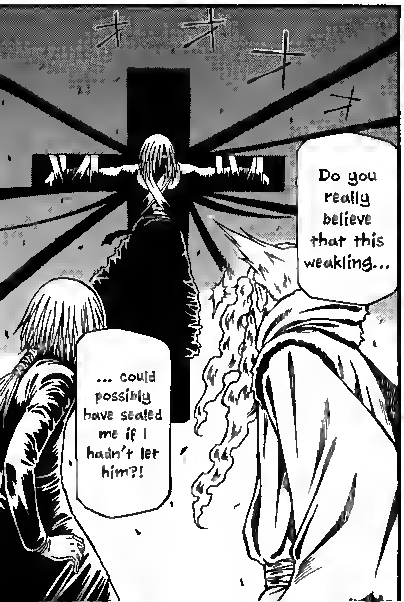
You're certainly made for it, though!
I'll even tell you this: if it were up to me, you'd be Tenshu as soon as today!
It's what I wish for from the bottom of my heart, Atori!

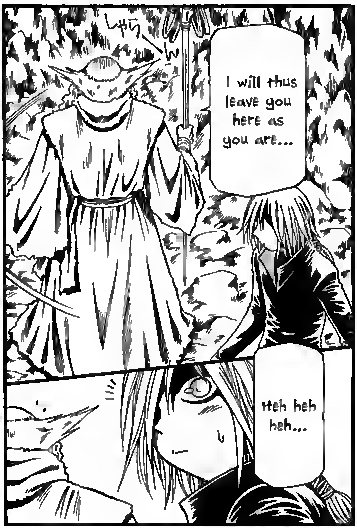
I still don't get it, Tobari...
During the 800 years you were sealed by the Tenshu following your dirty deeds...
you tirelessly kept sending your minions to hinder N U E's actions...
and recently, you even went after Atori!

Atori...
Atori!
My splendid little sister!
Atori!
You, who once shone so brightly, how could you become so twisted?
Waa ha ha ha ha!
We three venerable sages expected a lot from you...
as our future Tenshu...
You desired to become Tenshu through your own means...
rather than quietly waiting for your turn, is that it?


Our young friend here...
...seems a lot more perceptive than you, Senkiou!

By the looks of it, he doesn't plan to oppose the N.U.E...
I had doubted Yagiou, but he sealed you away...
Tlink!
Imbe-cile...
ガッ!!


Do you really believe that this weakling...
... could possibly have sealed me if I hadn't let him?!


I will thus leave you here as you are...
Heh heh heh...

You've turned into a senile old man, Senkiou!
WAAAAH!

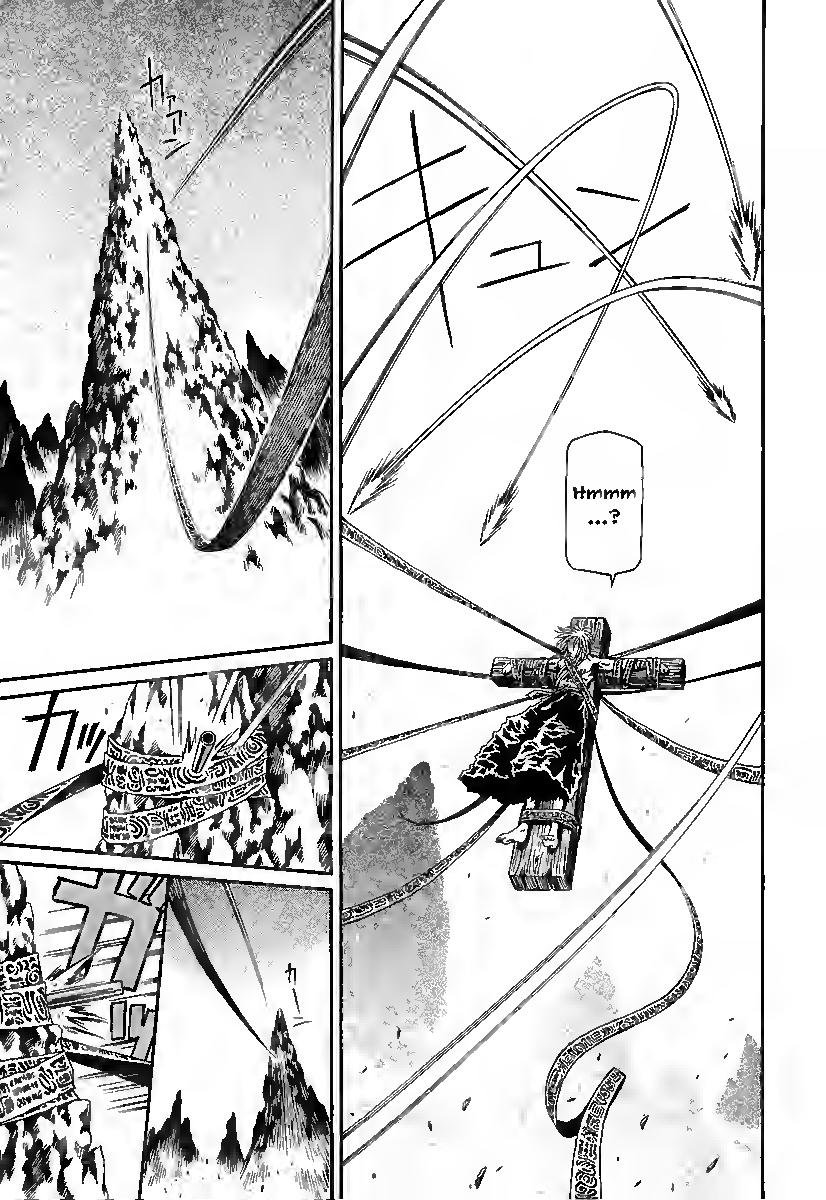
ゴォォォ
Listen up, you old oaf..
In the past, I went against my mother and it came back to bite me...
And then this human, Minamoto-don't-fucking-remember-the-rest, came to her aid..
so I played nice and let myself be sealed...
and waited quietly for the power of my dear progenitor to wane...
"Is he referring to Yorimasa, the demon slayer?"

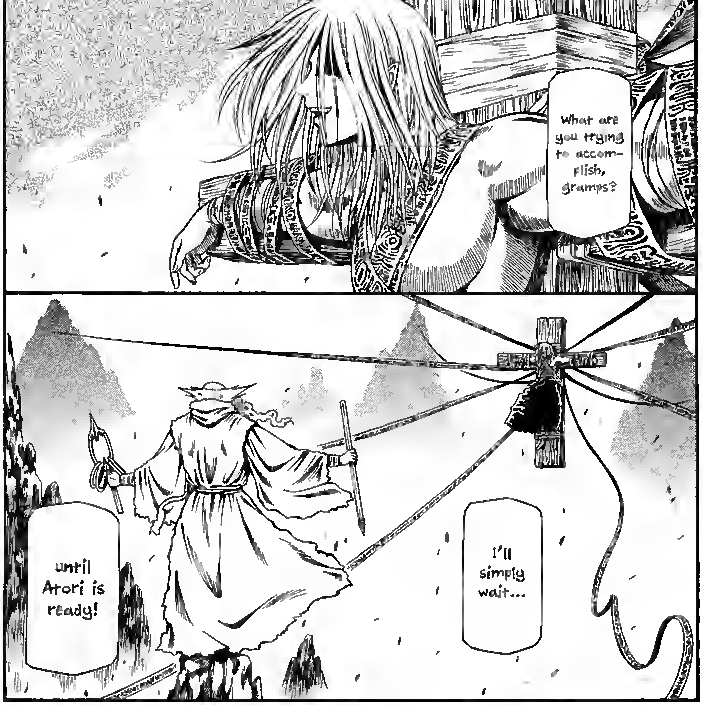
That's why I sent my deaties to look for her...
I'm referring to Atari, of course, the one called "the daughter of the Nue"—
And what happens 800 years later? She gives birth to this hybrid, half-human, half-demon...
and she leaves her to grow up amongst humans...
That was already getting interesting for me...
The girl turns out to be unbelievably strong!
And then, another surprise!

What more could I wish for?
Now I no longer have to face my mother...
just this Atori girl!
Then I also learn that she herself is coming to meet me!
You have no idea how eager I am to meet her!
!

ゴッ
So it was always his intention
to be sealed here by Yagiou
Mukau, I need a favour!

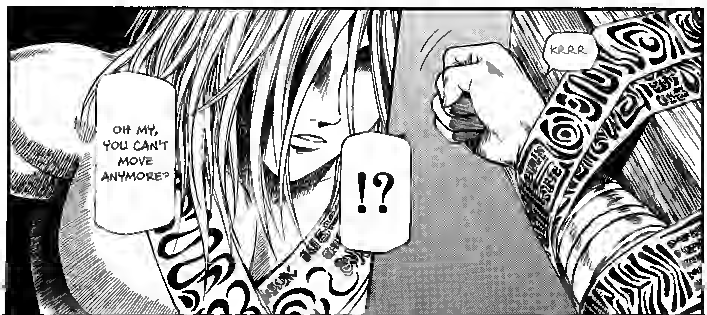
Make sure Arors never gets near this place!
Got it?
Uh... yeah, but... Hey, vene...
Tlinx!
Omf!
I'm too old for this shit!


ttmmm
...?

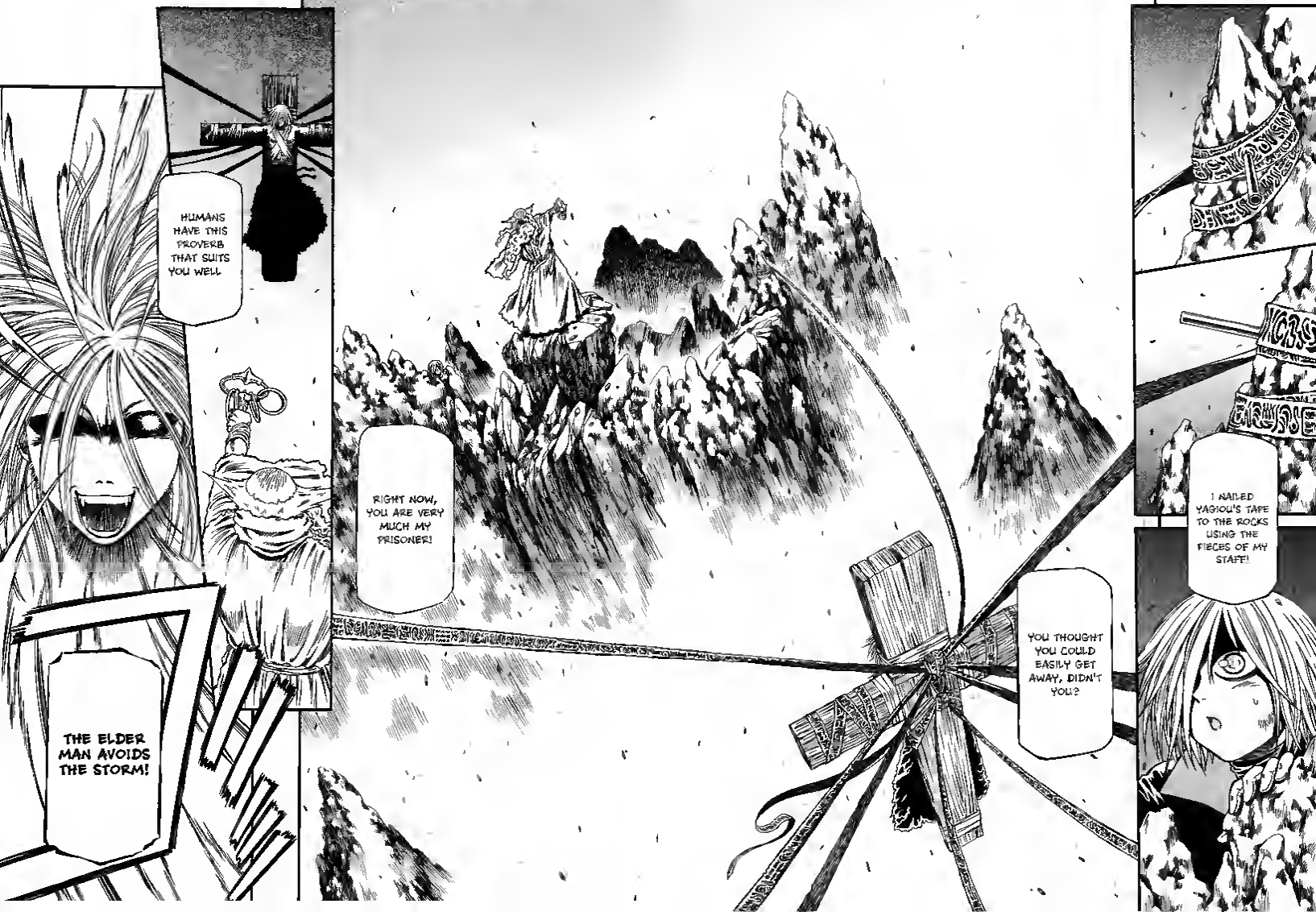

What are you trying to accomplish, gramps?
I'll simply wait...
until Atori is ready!

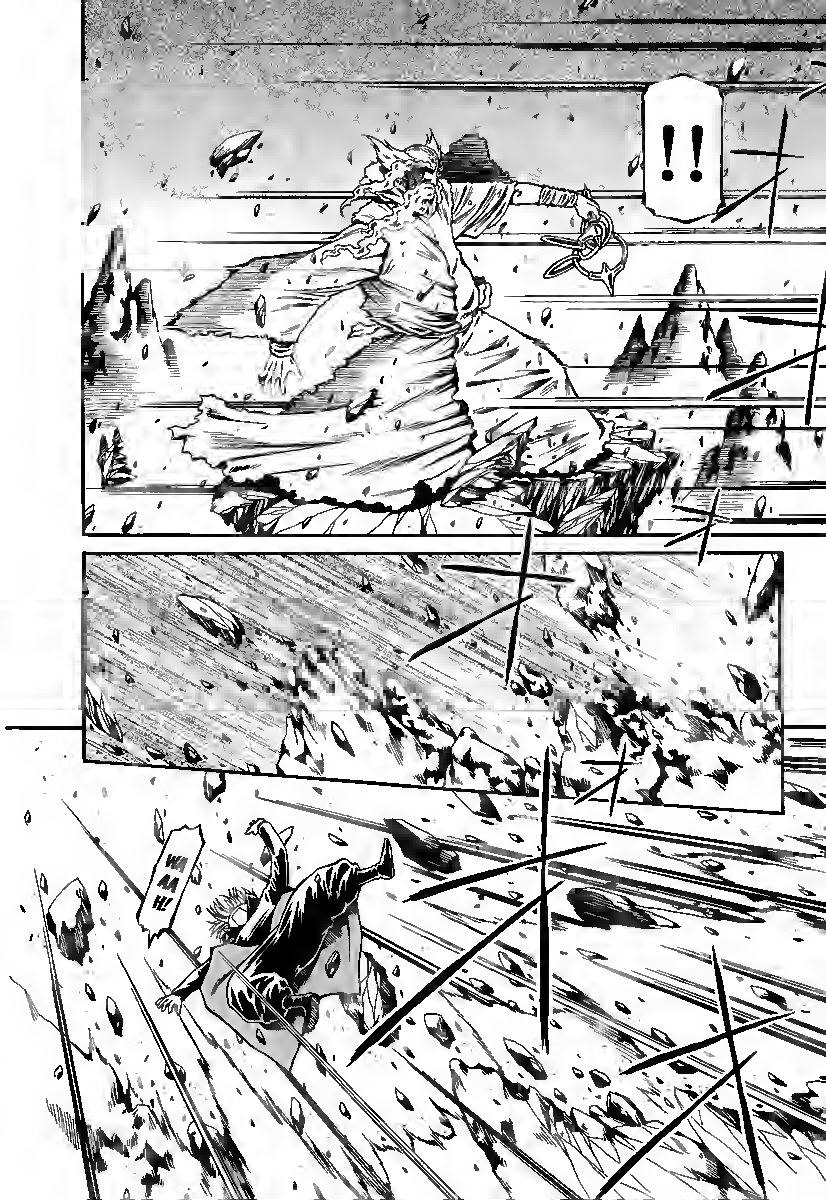
And guess what, Tobari?
You're gonna keep me company!

COME ON, THAT'S ENOUGH, GRAMPS!
IT WOULD SUCK FOR ME IF WE MANAGED TO KILL EACH OTHER HERE!
THAT WASN'T MY INTENTION... BUT TO PREVENT YOU FROM CAUSING HARM...
I'LL HAVE TO GO ALL OUT!


KRRR
!?
OH MY, YOU CAN'T MOVE ANYMORE?

CHAPTER 22 THE ONE WHO KNEW HER NAME


HUMANS HAVE THIS PROVERB THAT SUITS YOU WELL
RIGHT NOW, YOU ARE VERY MUCH MY PRISONER!
THE ELDER MAN AVOIDS THE STORM!
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD EASILY GET AWAY, DIDN'T YOU?
I NAILED YAGIOU'S TAPE TO THE ROCKS USING THE PIECES OF MY STAFF!


!!
WAAH!

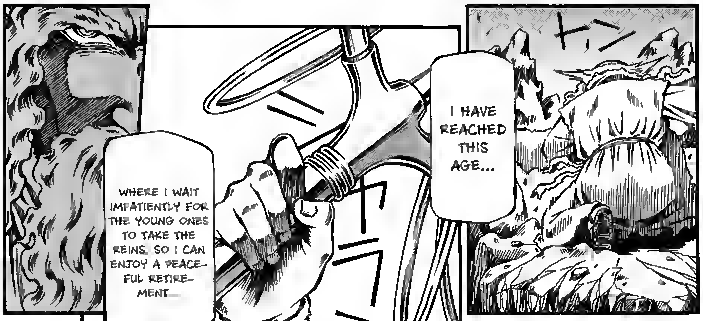
WHETHER IT'S YOU, THE VENERABLE SAGES, OR MY MOTHER, YOU ALL BELONG TO THE PAST!
PULL BACK WHILE YOU STILL CAN!

WAA

WAA
AH!
OW!

THERE'S ANOTHER HUMAN PROVERB...
"YOUNG FOLKS THINK OLD FOLKS TO BE FOOLS, BUT OLD FOLKS KNOW YOUNG FOLKS TO BE FOOLS"!

GN...
GNNN...
VLAP!


I HAVE REACHED THIS AGE...
WHERE I WAIT IMPATIENTLY FOR THE YOUNG ONES TO TAKE THE REINS, SO I CAN ENJOY A PEACEFUL RETIREMENT...

MASTER SENKIOU!!

ATORI...
KLAP
KLOP
SO? DID YOU MEET YAGIOU?
I DON'T THINK HE PLANS TO GO AGAINST THE N U E...
BUT...
UH...
YEAH...

WHEN I MENTIONED DOUSETSU...
HE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHO HE WAS
PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE HE HAS SO MANY SUBORDI-NATES
IT'S TRUE THAT HE COULDN'T KNOW ALL THEIR NAMES
BUT I WAS STILL SHOCKED
ATORI,.. HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED ANYTHING STRANGE IN THIS CASTLE?
HUH?!

I TOOK CARE TO OBSERVE MY SURROUNDINGS...
AND I COULD ONLY SEE WOMEN...
EACH OF THEM DRESSED IN THE MOST EXQUISITE OF FASHION.
TO BE HONEST, I DIDN'T PAY MUCH ATTENTION...
ATORI...
I THINK YOU'D DO WELL TO BE WARY OF HIM...
SHRI
SHRI
KILL
SHRI

SRRR!
したたたた
OH?!
MY GOODNESS!
SR R!
ぴょん
SR RR! SR RR!
IT'S ONE OF KAJI'S SRR-SRRS!
THIS LOOKS LIKE THE HANDKERCHIEF I HAD WRAPPED AROUND DOUSETSU'S HORN!
SRR!
HUH ?!
SRRR! SRRR! SRRR! SRRR! SRRR!
UHM
HE SAYS HE FOUND IT AT THE EDGE OF A CLIFF...
A CLIFF?

...THAT DOUSETSU
SO THAT MEANS...
DOUSETSU WAS A NO-GOOD THUG, BUT DURING OUR JOURNEY...
HE WAS SO DEEPLY TOUCHED BY YOUR GENTLENESS AND GENEROSITY THAT HE WAS WILLING TO SACRIFICE HIS LIFE FOR YOU!
ATORI... EVEN IF YOU BECOME THE TENSHU ONE DAY...
YOU WON'T FORGET ABOUT HIM, WILL YOU?
NO...
I WILL NEVER FORGET HIM...

SRRR SRRR SRRR SRRR!
SRRR SRRR SRRR SRRR...
KAT IS LOOKING FOR YOU, TOGETHER WITH YOUR HUMAN FRIENDS...
THEY MUST BE WORRIED SICK, KNOWING I'M "HERE"...
SRRR
MITSURUGI
I'M LISTENING...
I'LL NEED TO ASK YOU A FAVOUR...
YOU SHOULD PROBABLY LEAVE NOW, ALONG WITH IT...
OH YEAH?! COOL!
THE LITTLE CREATURE SAYS IT CAN CREATE A PASSAGE WAY PERMITTING TRAVEL BETWEEN THE TWO WORLDS.
SRR!

I WANT YOU TO TEACH ME THE ART OF WIELDING A SWORD!
MY STRENGTH IS LACKING!
I COULD NEVER BEAT TOBARI...
NOR COULD I PROTECT ANYONE OR ANYTHING...

"NOR COULD I DEFEAT YOU", IS THAT IT?
NO! NOT AT ALL!
IT'S TRUE THAT I'D LIKE TO, IF POSSIBLE, CROSS SWORDS WITH YOU ONCE AGAIN... BUT THAT'S JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT!

HE'S LAUGHING...
IF THAT'S WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU, THEN I SHALL TEACH YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT!
HA HA HA! YOU HAVE MY AGREEMENT!
I WILL AWAIT YOUR RETURN...
WITH EAGERNESS...
ME TOO...
IT FINALLY GREW BACK
YEAH!
EH? WAIT A MINUTE YOU'VE GOT A LEFT ARM AGAIN?!

NOPE NONE...
STILL NO NEWS FROM ATORI, FOUR EYES?
FUCK! WOMAN! QUIT CALLING ME THAT!
IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS NOW...
AND... UHM... "HI-CHAN" HER REPLACEMENT IS SHE HANDLING IT WELL?
HMM...

FOR NOW SHE'S MANAGED TO EARN HERSELF A DETENTION.
OH! IT'S KUMI!!
UH... MIYAKO, PLEASE EXCUSE ME FOR A MINUTE, WILL YOU?
WHAT?!

HI, KUMI! IT FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN FOREVER SINCE I LAST SAW YOU AROUND!
TAP! TAP!
HI NARUMI!
I WAS A BIT SICKLY THESE DAYS... SO I HAD TO TAKE A BREAK AND REST...
YOU GOT A HAIRCUT? I ALMOST DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOU!
DID YOU HEAR ABOUT ATORI?
SHE WAS ABDUCTED AND DRAGGED INTO THE DEMON WORLD!
IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS ALREADY...

I'M SURE SHE'LL BE OKAY...
HUH?!
"HI-CHAN, TAKE ON ATORI'S APPEARANCE AND HURRY" BACK TO THE SCHOOL!
I'LL WATCH OVER HER!
I'LL TREAT HER WELL, YOU'LL SEE!
DON'T WORRY! I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER!
THAT'S CRAZY. I CAN'T RECOGNIZE HER AT ALL

HEH HEH HEH... NAUGHTY FOUR EYES!
YOUR GIRL-FRIEND?
WH..
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE KAGURA KUMI FROM CLASS A!
OH!
WHEN IT COMES TO GIRLS YOUR TASTES ARE DEFINITELY QUITE VARIED!
SHE CAN ALSO SEE DEMONS...

うひひひ
AH, OKAY, THAT EXPLAINS IT! "BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER." AS THEY SAY!
THAT'S NOT IT!
AND LET GO OF ME!!
HUH ?!
I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU...

THE DEMON IN YOUR RIGHT HAND... IT'S "RAKUSHU", ISN'T IT?
IS HE SLEEPING?
HOW DO YOU KNOW HIS NAME?!
?
GULP
HE'S NOT LIKE THE OTHERS! HE NEVER COMES TO THE WORLD OF HUMANS...

I CAN UNDERSTAND YOU MAY NOTICE HIS PRESENCE IF YOU CAN SEE IN THE OTHER DIMENSION.
BUT NORMALLY, ONLY THE MEMBERS OF THE MIKAGE-SHU KNOW HIS NAME!
!!

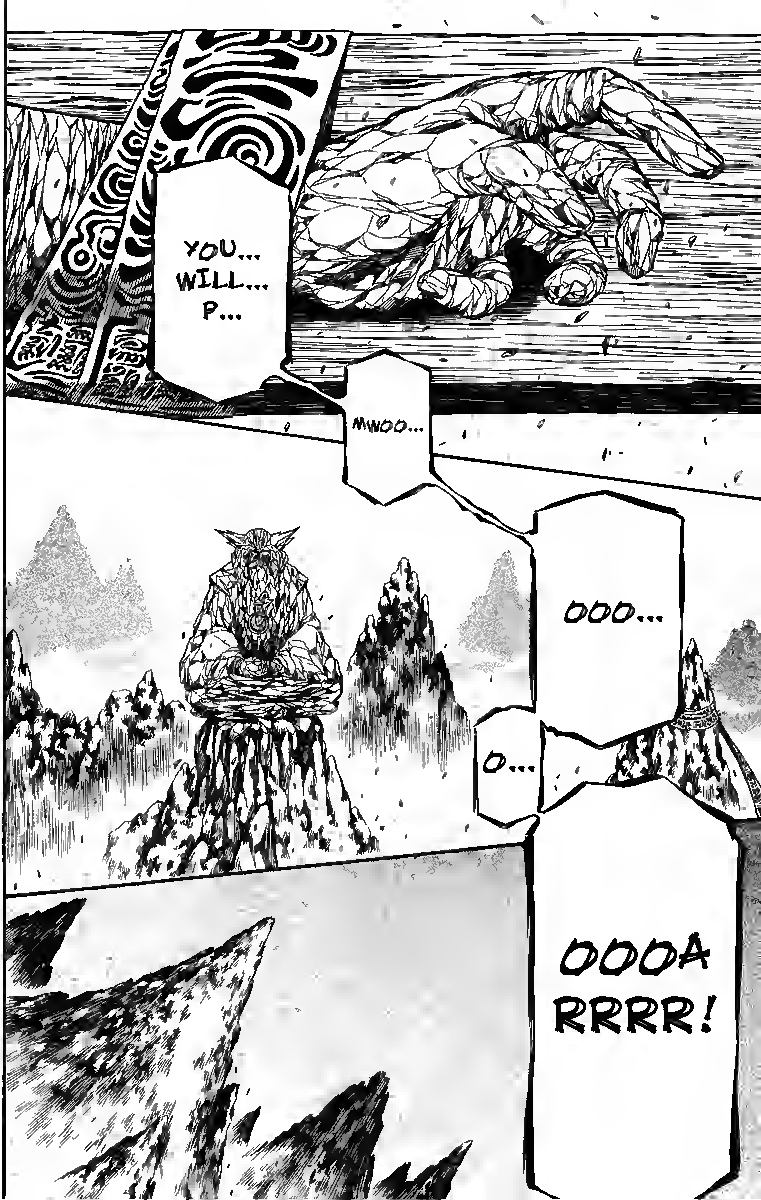
YOU ARE ALSO GOING THROUGH GREAT SUFFERING, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT?!

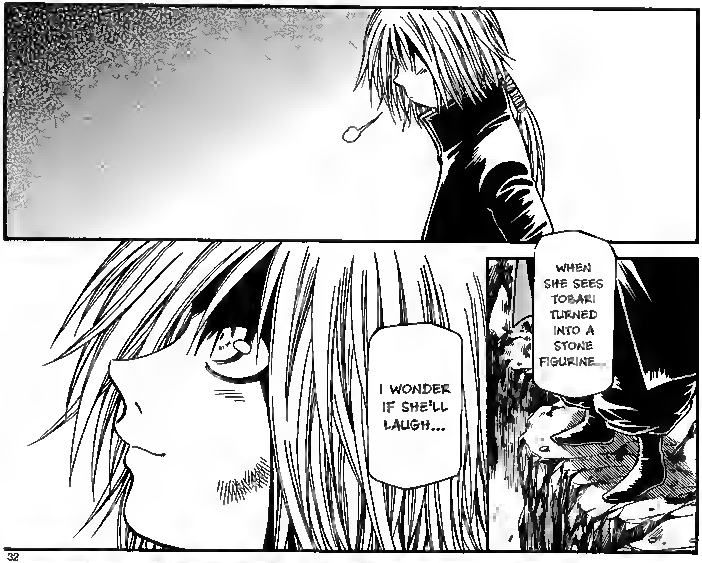
AAAH!
WAT'CHA UP TO, NARUMI?!
MIYAKO!
NI-CHAN MIND GETTING OFF ME?
WHY'RE YOU STANDING SO STILL? LIKE A SCARE-CROW!
SHTUP
WHAT DID YOU SAY?

I SAID SHUT UP!
YOU DEMON TRASH!!
HUH?!
WHAT?!
IS SHE IN A BAD MOOD OR SOME-THING?!
UH... NO CLUE...

MWO OOH!
WHAT IS...?
AND YET I ALREADY TOLD YOU!
YOU'RE KEEPING ME COMPANY, WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT!
VENERABLE SENKIOU...
GW OO OH!

NOT BAD FOR AN OLD GUY, EH, MUKAI?
I LEAVE ATOKI IN YOUR HANDS!
SENKIOU...
YOU OLD FOOL!

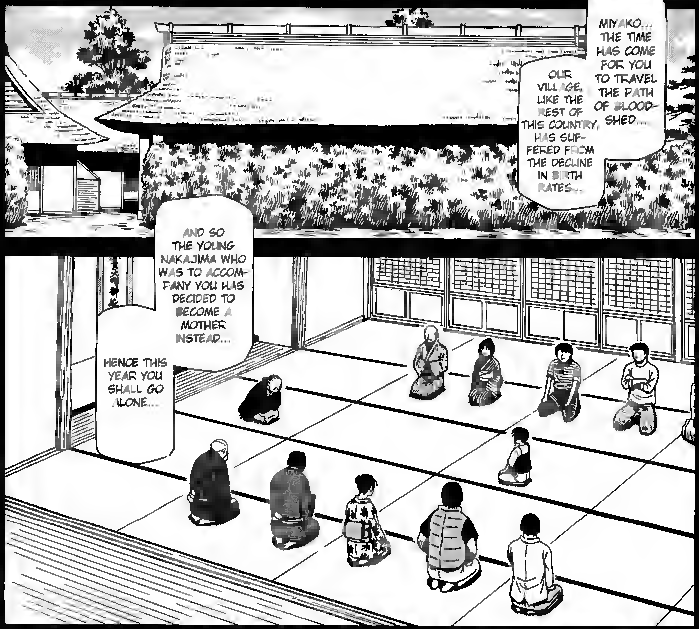

YOU... WILL... P...
MWOO...
OOO...
O...
OOOA RRRR!

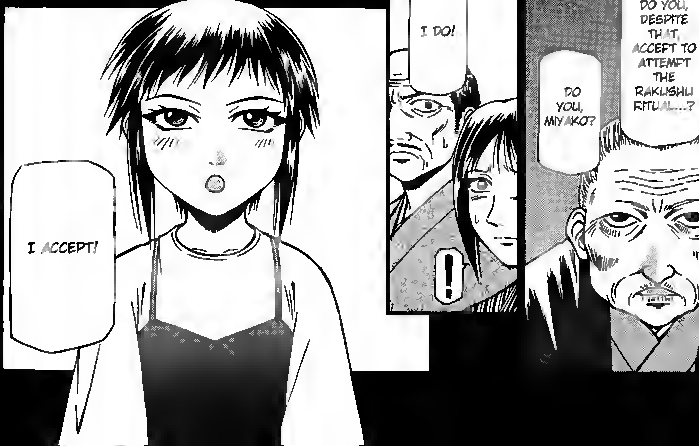

WHEN SHE SEES TOBARI TURNED INTO A STONE FIGURINE...
I WONDER IF SHE'LL LAUGH...

32

OR WILL SHE...

CHAPTER 23 THE RAKUSHU RITUAL


MIYAKO... THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO TRAVEL THE PATH OF BLOOD-SHED....
OUR VILLAGE, LIKE THE REST OF THIS COUNTRY, HAS SUFFERED FROM THE DECLINE IN BIRTH RATES...
AND SO THE YOUNG NAKAJIMA WHO WAS TO ACCOMPANY YOU HAS DECIDED TO BECOME A MOTHER INSTEAD...
HENCE THIS YEAR YOU SHALL GO ALONE...


I ACCEPT!
I DO!
!
DO YOU, DESPITE THAT, ACCEPT TO ATTEMPT THE RAKUSHI RITUAL...?
DO YOU, MIYAKO?

HAUNTED BY AN INEXHAUSTIBLE THIRST FOR DEMON BLOOD THIS CREATURE CAN EXTERMINATE ITS ADVERSARIES WITHIN FRACTIONS OF A SECOND
SACRIFICED HIMSELF LONG AGO TO SEAL THE DEMON RAKUSHU INSIDE A HOKORA
LISTEN TO ME CAREFULLY CHILD KAMONO DOUSEN FOUNDER OF THE MIKAGE-SHU ORDER
A HOKORA IS A MAGICAL TOME SPECIFIC TO SHRINES
HAA!
THE DEMON'S ESSENCE THUS HAS TO BE MAINTAINED ACTIVE WITHIN THE BODIES OF YOUNG VIRGINS
WHOSE ENERGY IT SLOWLY DRAINS AWAY

TOO SOFT!
99
THAT IS WHY THE POOR GIRLS WHO BECOME ITS HOSTS SOON SEE THEIR LIFE BRUTALLY CUT SHORT
UNLESS THEY ARE GIFTED WITH UNSHAKEABLE POWER OF WILL...
IT'S NOW BEEN OVER 10 YEARS SINCE THE LAST "BEARER" OF KAKUSHI DREW HER FINAL BREATHS
AND NO GIRL HAS MANAGED TO PASS THE TRIAL OF THE RITUAL EVER SINCE
THEN THOSE FEW FORTUNATE ONES CAN HOPE TO LIVE AS LONG AS I HAVE
I MYSELF HAVEN'T GOT LONG LEFT TO LIVE
SO I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO SUCCEED ME, MIYAKO...

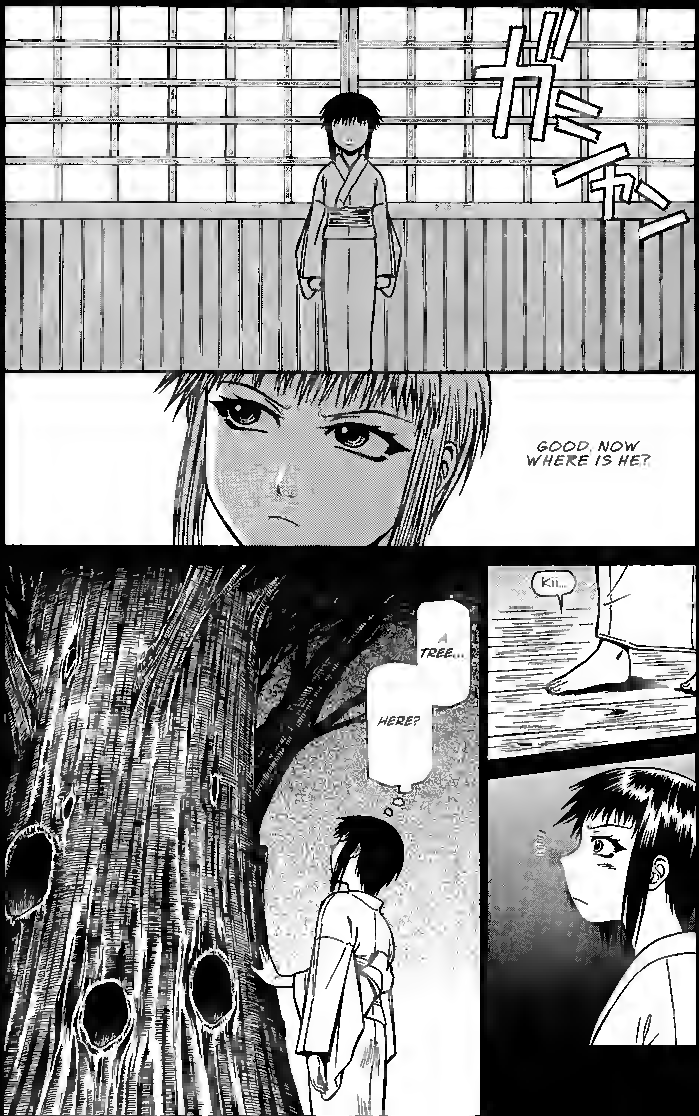
WHO GOES THERE?!
OH, WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT?
SHE CAN HEAR US...
LOOK, SIS, A HUMAN GIRL!
PFF!
I'M GOHOIN MIYAKO FROM THE MIKAGE! I FIRMLY AWAIT YOU!!
SHOW YOURSELVES, CREATURES OF THE SHADOWS!
I'VE HEARD OF THEM...
THE "MIKAGE"...

I THINK THEY WERE THIS BUNCH OF HUMANS WHO'RE ALWAYS ASKING FOR A FIGHT...
!
AAAH!
WORRY NOT, GIRL! THE ENRA SISTERS...
HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO INTEREST IN YOU...
?
BUT THEN AGAIN, IF SHE'S A MIKAGE...
FORGET IT...
FINALLY YOU SHOW YOURSELVES, YOU INFERNAL SUCCUBAE!

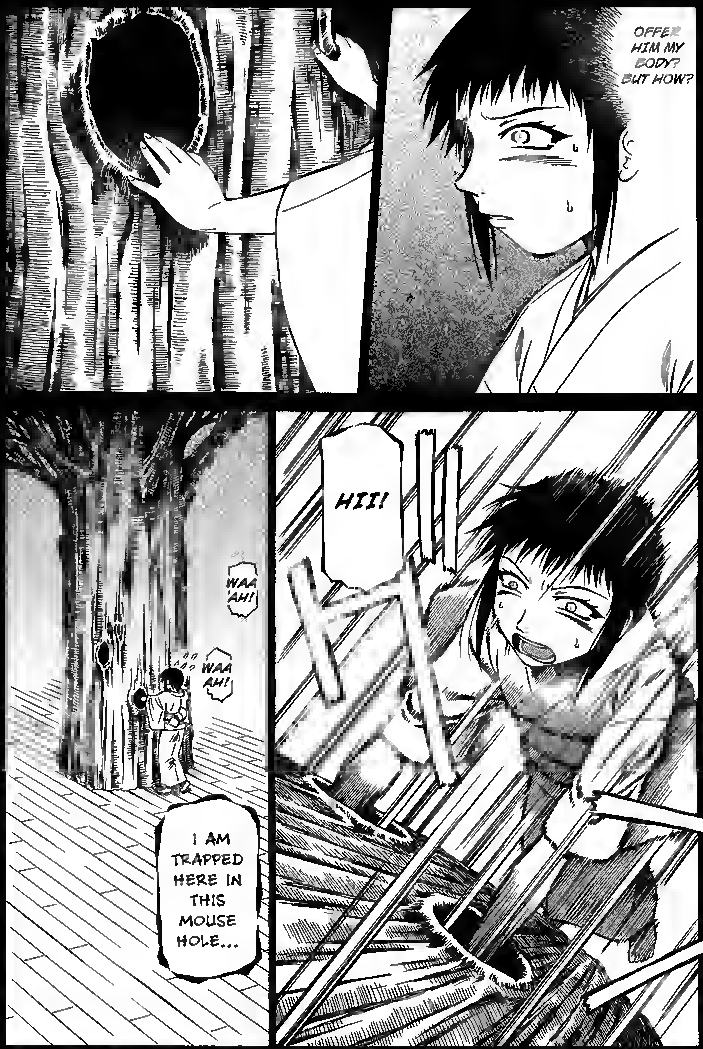
THIS GIRL IS SO FEAR-LESS! HOW ADORABLE!
BUT YOU STILL LACK EXPERIENCE!!
AAAH!!
GNII...

TRAIN HARD, HUMAN...
HO HO HO... STILL LIKE TO PLAY AROUND, I SEE...
AND THEN MAYBE YOU CAN HOPE TO CHALLENGE THE ENKA SISTERS!
DAMNED ABOMINATIONS!
AND YOU SHOULD TAKE MORE HEED OF THE HUMANS!
COME NOW, YOU KNOW MY HEART IS FULLY DEVOTED TO TOBARI!

FIVE YEARS AGO THE GRAND-DAUGHTER OF OUR TRADITION'S ANCIENT KEEPER FAILED
TEN YEARS AGO THE YAMAOKA'S DAUGHTER LOST HER LIFE...
AND AFTER HER ATTEMPT LAST YEAR YOUR OWN SISTER WAS LOCKED AWAY THE POOR GIRL HAVING LOST ALL THAT WAS HUMAN ABOUT HER BUT HER NAME...
MY SISTER...
MIYAKO...
I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO BRING GOOD NEWS TO THE MIKAGE-SHU'S FOLLOWERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD...

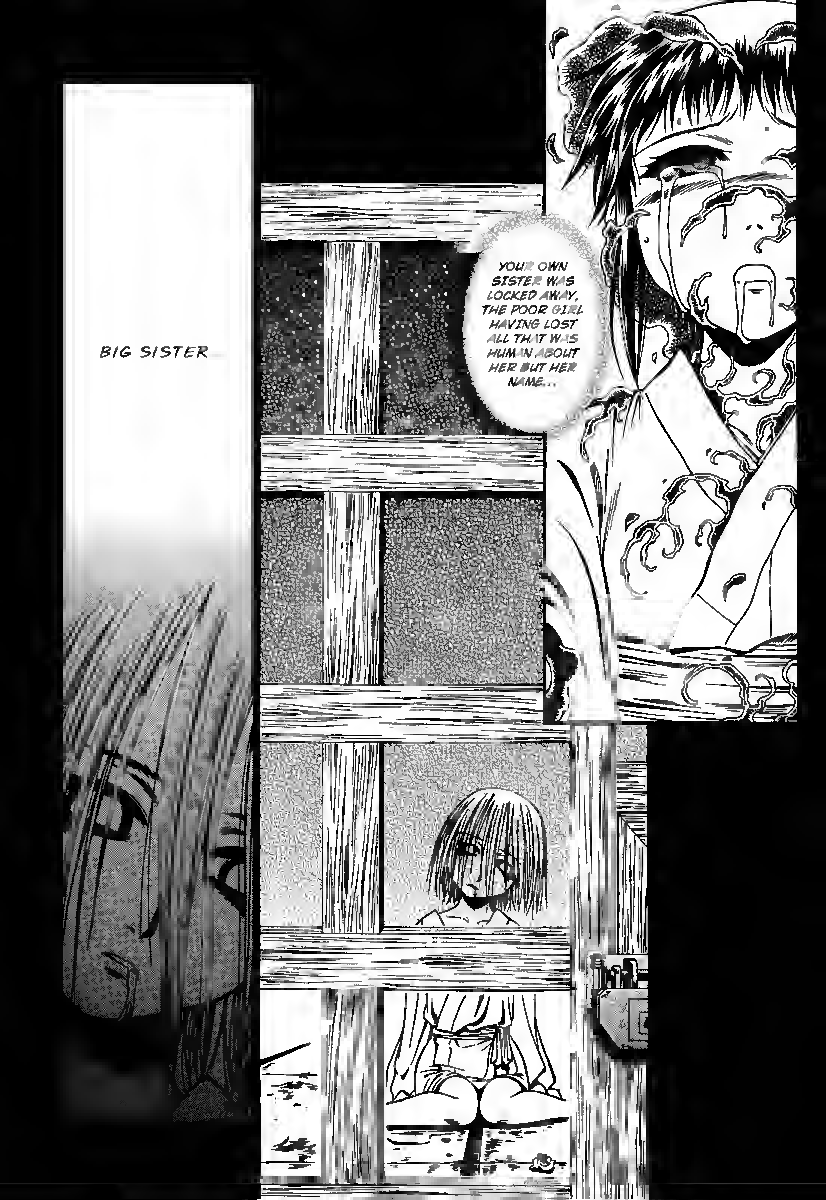

ガシャン
GOOD. NOW WHERE IS HE?
Kii...
A TREE...
HERE?

SO ARE YOU THE SACRIFICE THIS TIME?
RAKUSHU?!
I AM RAKUSHU ...
IF YOU WISH TO USE MY POWER...
THEN OFFER ME YOUR BODY!


OFFER HIM MY BODY? BUT HOW?
HII!
WAA AH!
WAA AH!
I AM TRAPPED HERE IN THIS MOUSE HOLE...

SO QUICKLY GIVE ME YOUR ENERGY...
AND DEMON BLOOD...
SOMETHING IS...
Tokuu!
Tokuu!
Tokuu!
PENETRATING ME...
AND MY FREEDOM!

ビカーン
ビカー
HIII...
LET ME...
ENTER YOU!!
AAAH...
AA...
AAAH...
AAAH!


BIG SISTER...
YOUR OWN SISTER WAS LOCKED AWAY, THE POOR GIRL HAVING LOST ALL THAT WAS HUMAN ABOUT HER BUT HER NAME...

I WON'T JUST STAND BY...
BIG SISTER...
TO SOME VULGAR LOW-GRADE DEMON!!
AND GIVE MYSELF...

NOW, RAKUSHUU... YOU WILL BE ON MY BECK AND CALL JUST LIKE A GOOD LITTLE PUPPY!

"TENJIN-BARA"?
THE SANCTUARY GIVES YOU DIRECT ACCESS TO N.U.E HEADQUARTERS...
YOU HAVE TRAINED YOURSELF TO HUNT DEMONS FOR 5 YEARS NOW...
I THINK YOU'RE READY...
I WANT YOU TO SHOW YOURSELF AT LEAST ONCE BEFORE THE TENSHU THE LEADER OF N.U.E WITH WHOM WE SIGNED A PACT OF NON-AGGRESSION...
WISE WOMAN, ARE YOU SURE YOU WOULDN'T RATHER LET ME JUST KILL THEM ALL ONCE AND FOR ALL?

HO HO HO... SETTLE WITH JUST SAYING HELLO...
BUT BE ON YOUR GUARD ANYWAY
DEMONS WILL ALWAYS BE DEMONS!
ALWAYS BE ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE N.U.E.,
BUT BEYOND THAT, IT IS UP TO YOU TO DECIDE WHOM YOU CAN TRUST...
ALL RIGHT, MOM...
I'VE GOT TO GO NOW...
MIYAKO...

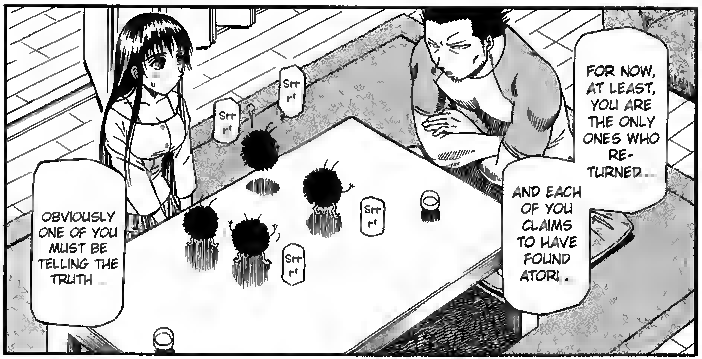
I'VE HAD YOU INSIDE ME FOR SIX YEARS NOW...
THE DEMON IN YOUR RIGHT HAND... IT'S "RAKUSHU", ISN'T IT?
YOU ARE ALSO GOING THROUGH GREAT SUFFERING, AREN'T YOU?
JUST WHO IS THAT GIRL?
SHE SPOKE AS IF SHE KNEW ALL THERE WAS TO KNOW ABOUT ME...

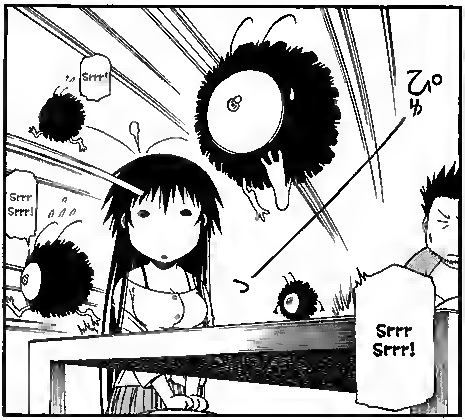
WOAH, WHAT'S UP WITH YOU? YOUR TUMMY HURTING?
LEAVE ME ALONE!
NOW I REALLY CAN'T RECOGNIZE YOU. THE FIRST TIME WE MET...
YOU WASTED NO TIME IN GOING AFTER MY NECK!
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE FROM NOW ON...
OTHERWISE YOU WILL BITTERLY REGRET IT...
COME ON! QUIT POUTING!
I AM EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO YOU, YOU KNOW?
HUH?! AND WHY WOULD THAT BE?!

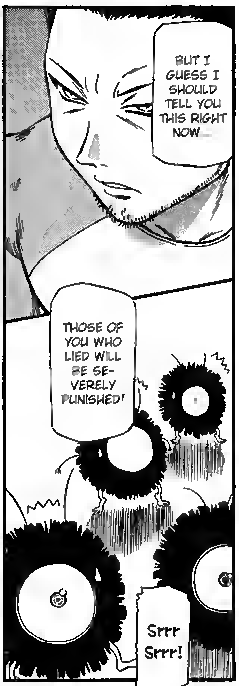
REMEMBER THAT TIME WHEN YOU PUNCHED A HOLE THROUGH MY JAW?
WELL, NARUMI HAS BEEN SOOOO GENTLE WITH ME SINCE THEN!
.....
♡
WELL WE CERTAINLY FIND ALL KINDS OF DEMONS IN THIS WIDE WORLD
AH!
Ouch!
Froup!
GET YOUR DIRTY PAWS OFF THERE!

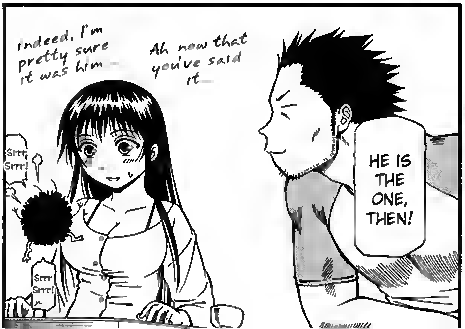
Srrr Srrr!
Srrr Srrr!
Srrr Srrr!
Srrr Srrr!
WELL?
HIM?
WHICH ONE OF THEM FOUND YOU...?
Srrr?
UH... NO... HIM THEN, MAYBE...?
Srrr! Srrr!
Srrr Srrr!
WELL
UHM...
Srrr Srrr!
Srrr Srrr!
Srrr Srrr!

CHAPTER 24 A THOUSAND YEARS OF REGRET


FOR NOW, AT LEAST, YOU ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO RE-TURNED...
AND EACH OF YOU CLAIMS TO HAVE FOUND ATORI.
OBVIOUSLY ONE OF YOU MUST BE TELLING THE TRUTH...
Srrr rr
Srrr rr
Srrr rr
Srrr rr

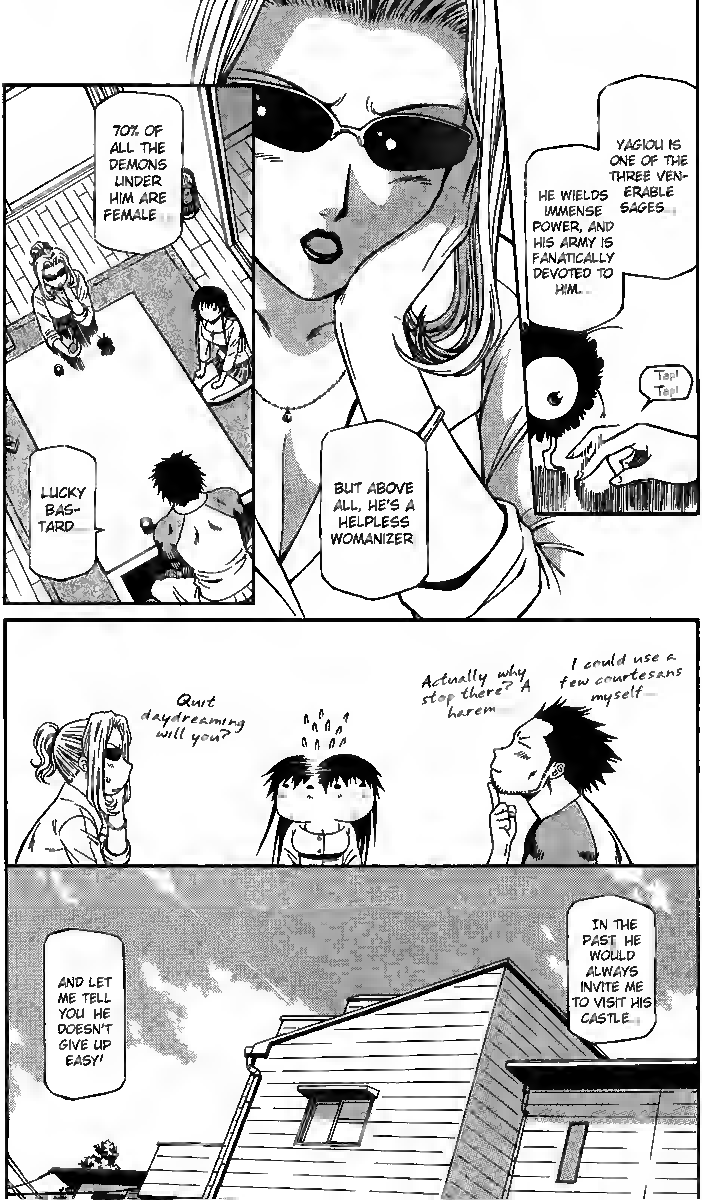

Srrr!
Srrr Srrr!
Srrr Srrr!


BUT I GUESS I SHOULD TELL YOU THIS RIGHT NOW...
THOSE OF YOU WHO LIED WILL BE SE-VERELY PUNISHED!
Srrr Srrr!


Indeed. I'm pretty sure it was him...
Ah, now that you've said it...
HE IS THE ONE, THEN!
Srrr Srrr!
Srrr Srrr!

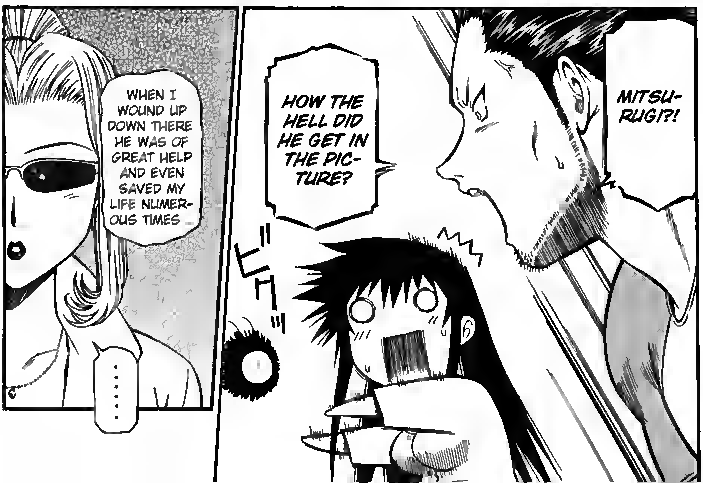
IT WAS YAGIOU... HE JUST WANTED TO TALK...
SO WHAT DID THE DEMON WHO KIDNAPPED YOU WANT?
YAGIOU?! YOU MET HIM?
?
UH— YEAH...

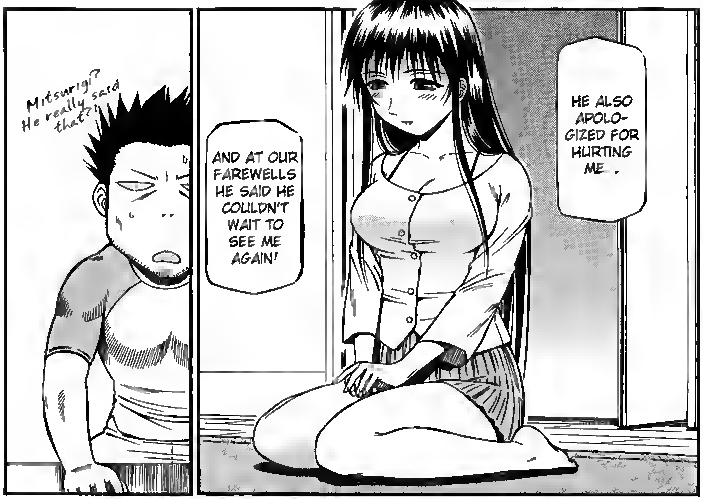
YOU MUST NEVER GET NEAR HIM AGAIN! EVER!
LISTEN UP, ATORI!
WHY THE EXTREME REACTION, NANASE?!


70% OF ALL THE DEMONS UNDER HIM ARE FEMALE...
LUCKY BAS-TARD...
BUT ABOVE ALL, HE'S A HELPLESS WOMANIZER
HE WIELDS IMMENSE POWER, AND HIS ARMY IS FANATICALLY DEVOTED TO HIM...
YAGIOU IS ONE OF THE THREE VEN-ERABLE SAGES...
Tap! Tap!
Quit daydreaming will you?
Actually why stop there? A harem...
I could use a few courtesans myself...
AND LET ME TELL YOU HE DOESN'T GIVE UP EASY!
IN THE PAST HE WOULD ALWAYS INVITE ME TO VISIT HIS CASTLE...

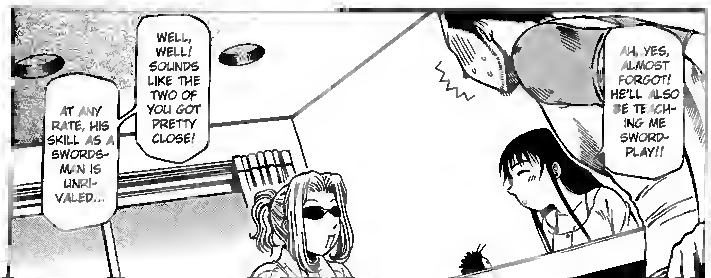
YOU MIGHT HAVE HAD A GOOD TIME IF YOU'D ACCEPTED!
YOU MUST BE KIDDING!
AND ANYWAY, HE'S NOT MY TYPE AT ALL!

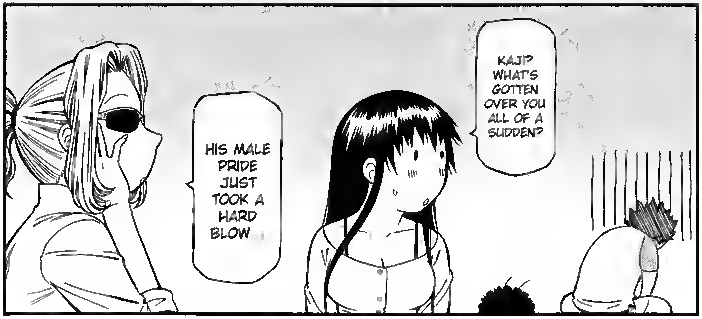
MITSU-RUGI ALSO...
WARNED ME ABOUT HIM...

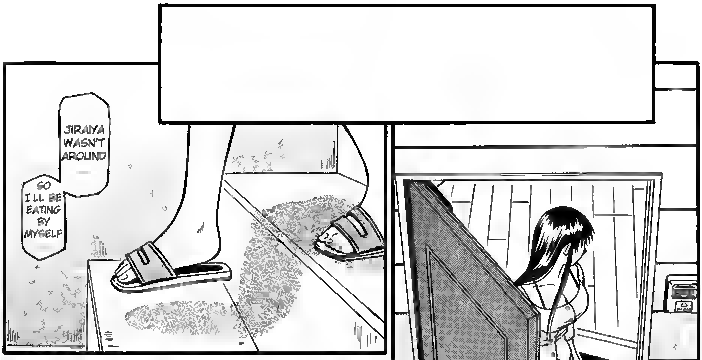

MITSU-RUGI?!
HOW THE HELL DID HE GET IN THE PIC-TURE?
ビクッ!!
WHEN I WOUND UP DOWN THERE HE WAS OF GREAT HELP AND EVEN SAVED MY LIFE NUMER-OUS TIMES
……


Mitsuru-?
He really said that?!
AND AT OUR FAREWELLS HE SAID HE COULDN'T WAIT TO SEE ME AGAIN!
HE ALSO APOLOGIZED FOR HURTING ME.

.....
THAT GUY, HE'S GOT CLASS! NOTHING TO DO WITH THE OTHER FLIRTS WHO COME A DIME A DOZEN!
OH HO HO! THAT'S SO MUCH LIKE HIM!
Sniff


WELL, WELL! SOUNDS LIKE THE TWO OF YOU GOT PRETTY CLOSE!
AT ANY RATE, HIS SKILL AS A SWORDSMAN IS UNEQUALED...
AH, YES, ALMOST FORGOT! HE'LL ALSO BE TEACHING ME SWORDPLAY!!


KAJI? WHAT'S GOTTEN OVER YOU ALL OF A SUDDEN?
HIS MALE PRIDE JUST TOOK A HARD BLOW


JIRAIYA WASN'T AROUND
SO I'LL BE EATING BY MYSELF
WELL. I'M OFF, THEN

SO, KAJI, WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON ALL THIS?

ON THE OTHER HAND, WHEN IT COMES TO THE OTHER TWO, YAGIOU AND SUIKO...
Tchak!
WE KNOW THE OLD SENKIOU WELL... AND CAN TRUST HIM.
Srrr!
WE'D BETTER STAY ON OUR TOES...
I'VE NEVER MET THEM, SO I CAN'T JUDGE...
BUT THEY ARE THE ONES WHO RULED OVER THE DEMON WORLD BEFORE THE TENSHU'S ERA
THAT'S WHY IT WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME IF THEY DESIRED TO SEE THEIR RULE RE-STORED...

YAGIOU SUPPOSEDLY TOLD ATORI HE HAD NO INTENTION TO ACT AGAINST THE NILE...
BUT THERE'S NO GUARANTEE HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH!
BESIDES, I'M NOT HAPPY AT ALL TO LEARN THAT HE WANTED TO MEET THE LITTLE ONE!
AS FOR SUIKO WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT HIM... THAT IS WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF HE'S STILL ALIVE!
WE NEED MORE INFO...
SOMOM!

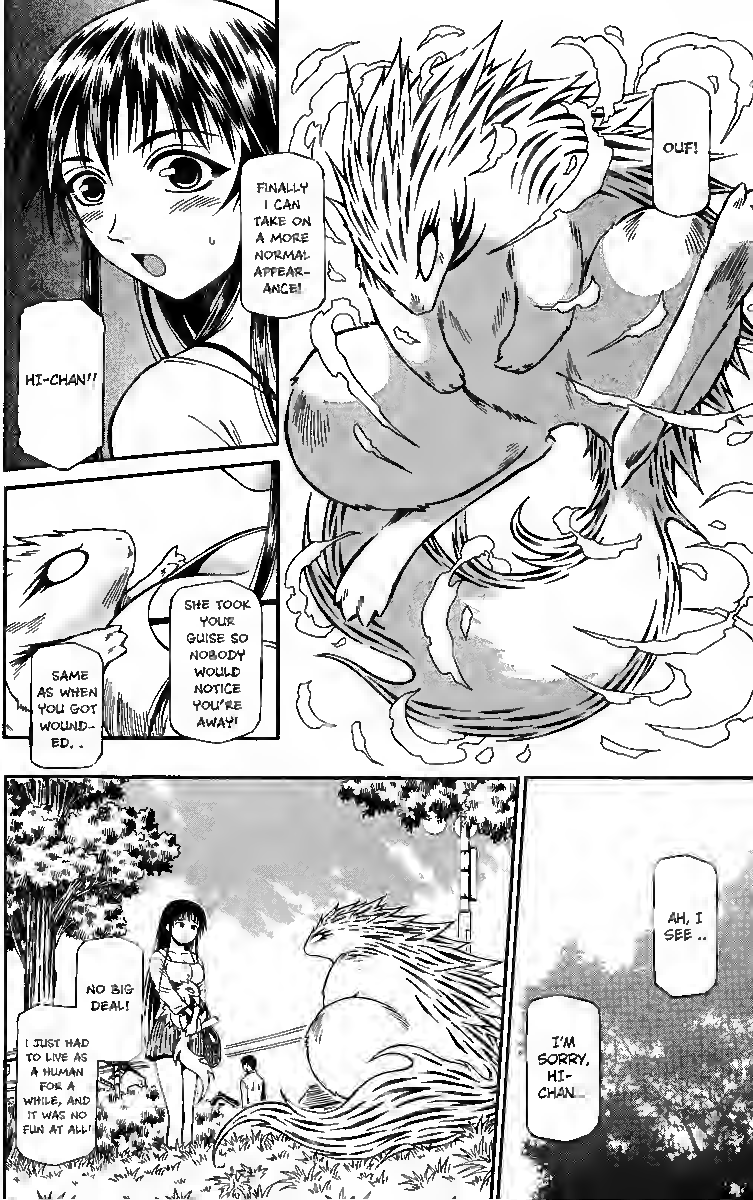
HEY...
WHY DON'T WE BRING ATORI...
TO HER MOTHER?
NOW MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME, DON'T YOU THINK?
YOU'RE RIGHT...

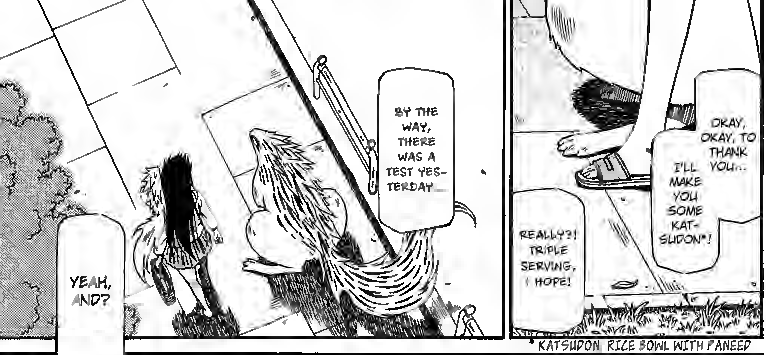
BY THE WAY, DID THEY FINISH REPAIRS AT HQ?
I'LL BRING IT UP WITH THE TENSHU ..
ALMOST...
ACTUALLY, WE NEED TO GO BACK THERE SOON!
HOW'S YOUR WOUND?
ANY BETTER?
SEE YOU TO-NIGHT?
IDIOT
WANNA GET A TASTE OF THE BEAST?
AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M ITCH-ING TO GO!

WE MET RECENTLY!
SHE'S TANAKA FROM 3RD YEAR!
!
I HAVEN'T GONE TO SCHOOL IN AGES...
I HOPE I CAN QUICKLY ADJUST TO IT...

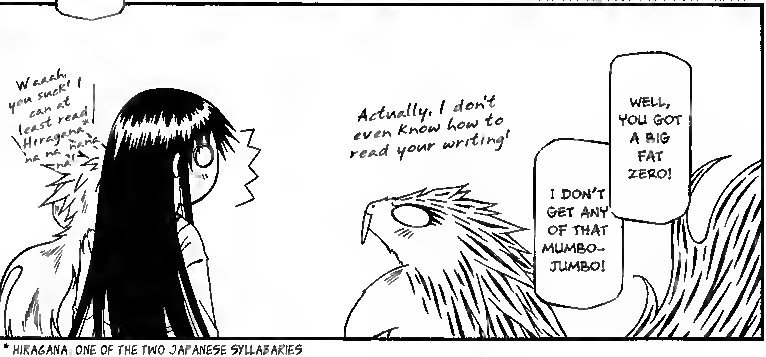
THE WEATHER'S SO NICE TODAY...
So, Jiratya, how much longer is this gonna take? What's the status?!
HUH?!
BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW, YOU MIGHT WANNA THINK ABOUT FINDING HER ONE OF THESE DAYS!

NARUMI DOESN'T GET NEAR ME WHEN I'M LIKE THIS!
HAH, NO SURPRISE THERE!
IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THAT GUY FROM N.U.E.!
OH!
STAP!
JI-RAIYA AND...
ME ?
AH!
A...
LIHM.
ATORI!!
WE WERE LOOKING FOR YOU EVERYWHERE!!

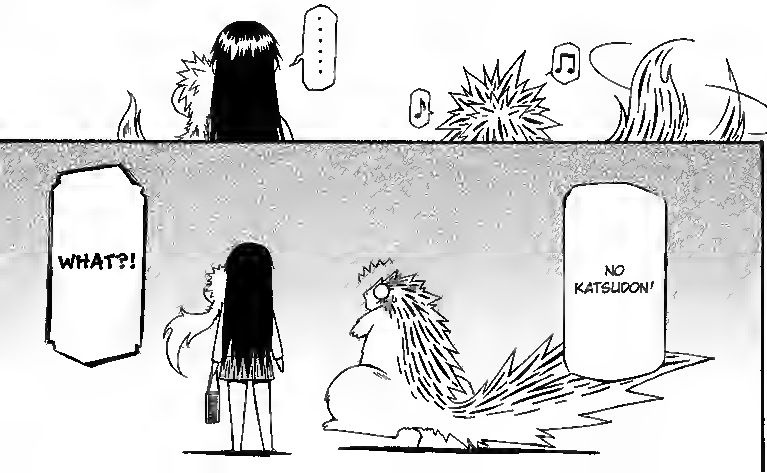

FINALLY I CAN TAKE ON A MORE NORMAL APPEARANCE!
HI-CHAN!!
OUF!
SHE TOOK YOUR GUISE SO NOBODY WOULD NOTICE YOU'RE AWAY!
SAME AS WHEN YOU GOT WOUNDED. .
NO BIG DEAL!
I JUST HAD TO LIVE AS A HUMAN FOR A WHILE, AND IT WAS NO FUN AT ALL!
I'M SORRY, HI-CHAN...
AH, I SEE ..

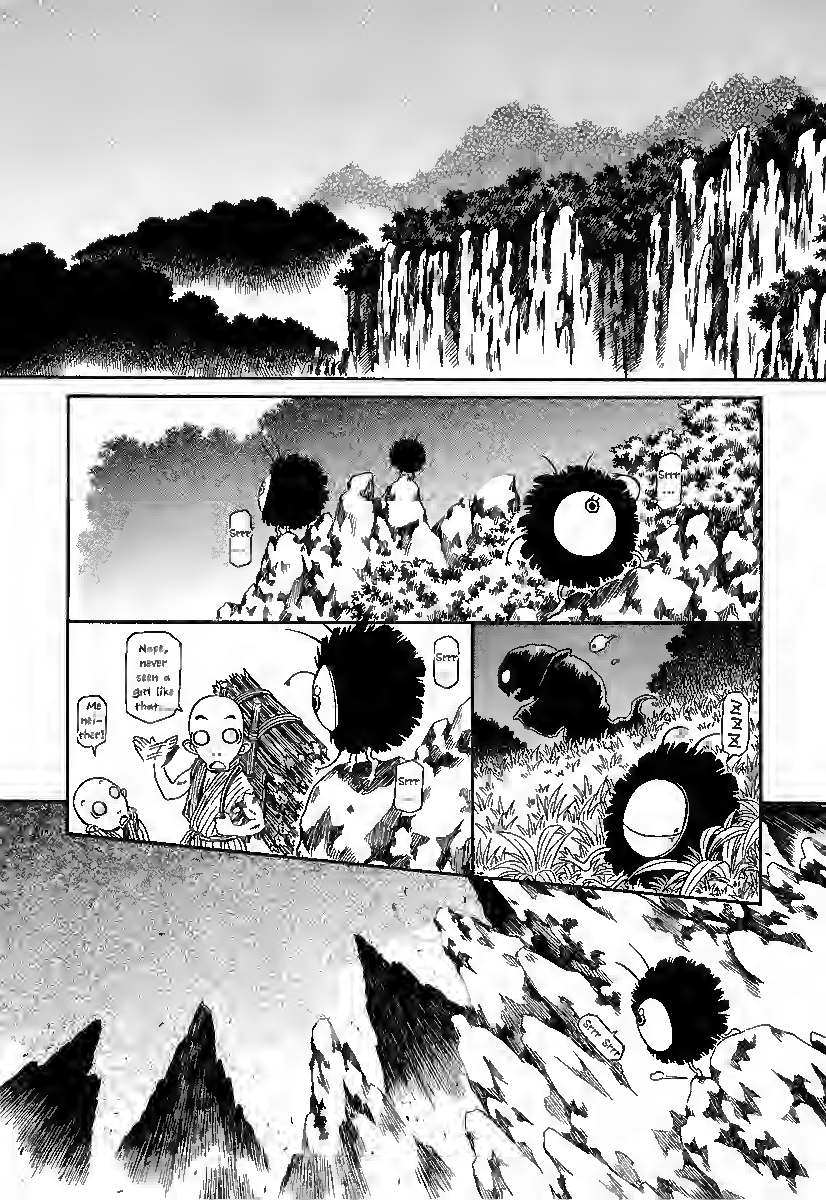

BY THE WAY, THERE WAS A TEST YESTERDAY...
YEAH, AND?
OKAY, OKAY, TO THANK YOU... I'LL MAKE YOU SOME KATSUDON*!
REALLY?! TRIPLE SERVING, I HOPE!

* KATSUDON: RICE BOWL WITH PANEED

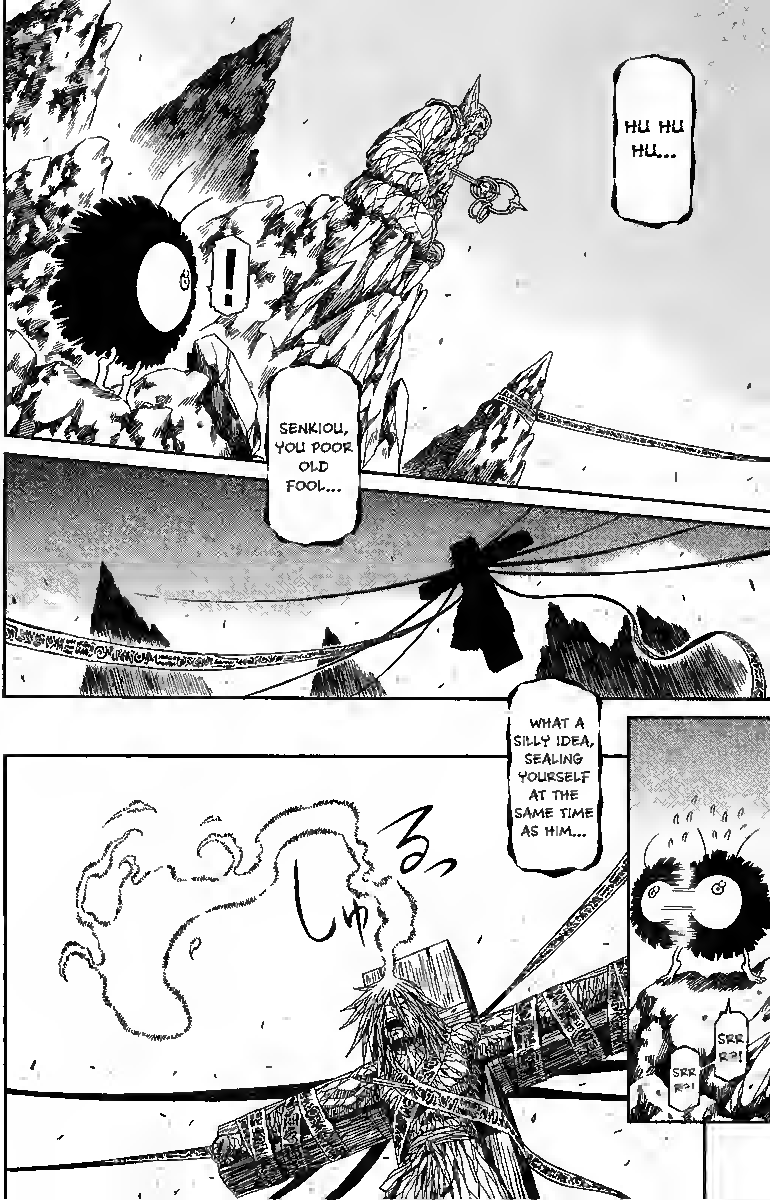

Waaah, you suck! I can at least read Hiragana! Hiragana na no ni... hana ga... mata...
Actually, I don't even know how to read your writing!
WELL, YOU GOT A BIG FAT ZERO!
I DON'T GET ANY OF THAT MUMBO-JUMBO!

* HIRAGANA: ONE OF THE TWO JAPANESE SYLLABARIES




Srrr...
Srrr...
Srrr...
Srrr...
Nope, never seen a girl like that...
Me neither!
NIMK
Srrr Srrr

SRRR
SRRR?


HU HU HU...
!
SENKIOU, YOU POOR OLD FOOL...
WHAT A SILLY IDEA, SEALING YOURSELF AT THE SAME TIME AS HIM...
SRR R?!
SRR R?!

MY GOODNESS, WHAT IS THIS?!
It came out of Tobari's body...
PETRIFYING YOURSELF ALONG WITH HIM...
YOU INTEND TO KEEP HIM COMPANY FOR ALL ETERNITY?
I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU, THAT REALLY HELPS ME OUT...
TO ME, YOU ARE EVEN MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE N.U.E....
Nyerk!

IT WOULD BE TERRIBLE IF SOMEONE...
That voice...
...DECIDED TO FREE YOU...
SO SHE WAS THE ONE MANIPULATING THE TENSHU'S SON?!!
YOU MUST UNDER-STAND THAT I CAN'T TAKE THAT SORT OF RISK...

For almost a thousand years, we didn't notice anything...
That would explain the sudden shift in Tobari's personality...
who would have thought...
SO LONG, SENKIOU!

GOOD RID-
DANCE...
AND
NOW,
WE'LL
SEE HOW
THINGS
PROG-
RESS...
ISN'T
THAT
RIGHT,
MY
DEAR
TOBARI?

Dine Dong!
I'M COMING!
AH!
IT'S YOU, NARUMI?
UH.. YEAH..
WHY NOT PUT ON A SKIRT OR SOME PANTS? I CAN WAIT, YOU KNOW?
NAH, THING IS, I JUST HAD A BATH...
WARP!!!
カチャ

I'M GIVING IT TO YOU! NO ULTERIOR MOTIVES, I ASSURE YOU!
WHEN DO YOU WANT IT BACK?

IT'S ABOUT THE WORLD OF DEMONS
oh ok
I WANT YOU TO READ THIS
SHINGOZOKU

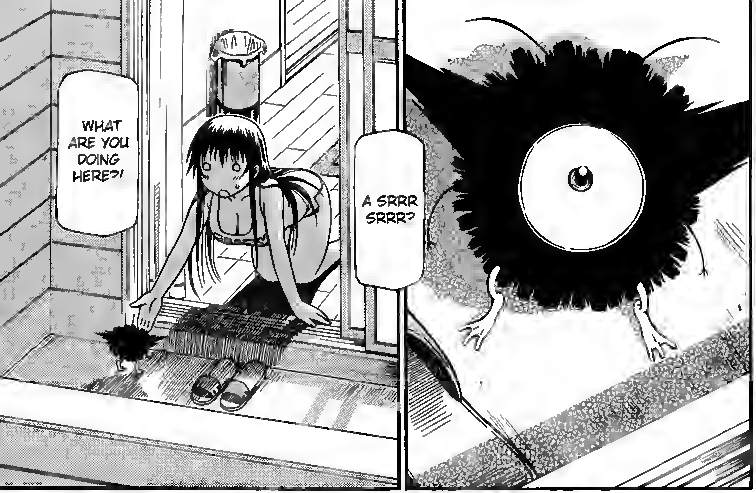
I WAS ABOUT TO HAVE DINNER.
THANKS
AH...
WANNA COME IN?
AH... NO THANKS!

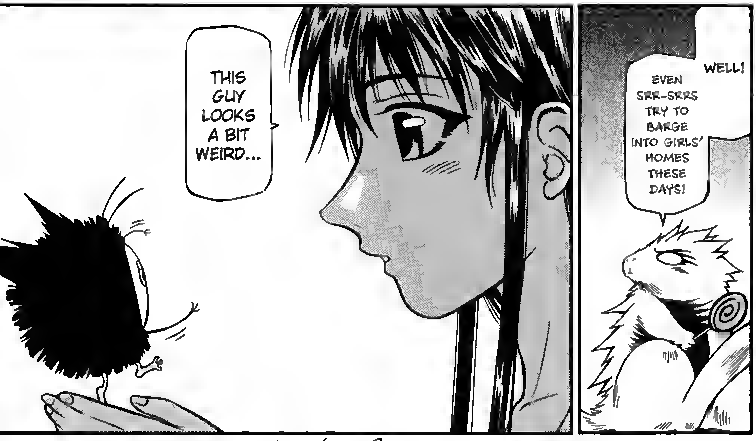
A MAN AND A WOMAN...

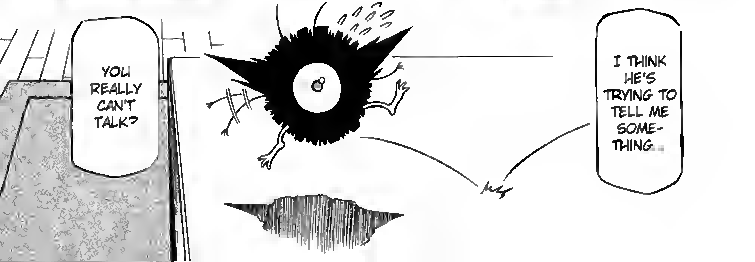
TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK ONCE YOU'VE READ IT
TAKE YOUR TIME, THOUGH, NO RUSH...
SURE...
HEH, WELL, LATER ...
BYE!

"THOSE WHO ARE THERE"
"ISHI BLE. KAHO"
SINCE IT WASN'T JUST AN EXCUSE TO INVITE HIMSELF IN...
THAT VOICE, WAS IT NARUMI?
AN "EXCUSE"? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Scratch! Scratch!
Knock!
Poor little Atori I'm afraid you've still got a lot to learn!
HMM?


WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
A SRRR SRRR?


THIS GUY LOOKS A BIT WEIRD...
WELL! EVEN SRR-SRRS TRY TO BARGE INTO GIRLS' HOMES THESE DAYS!


YOU REALLY CAN'T TALK?
I THINK HE'S TRYING TO TELL ME SOME-THING...

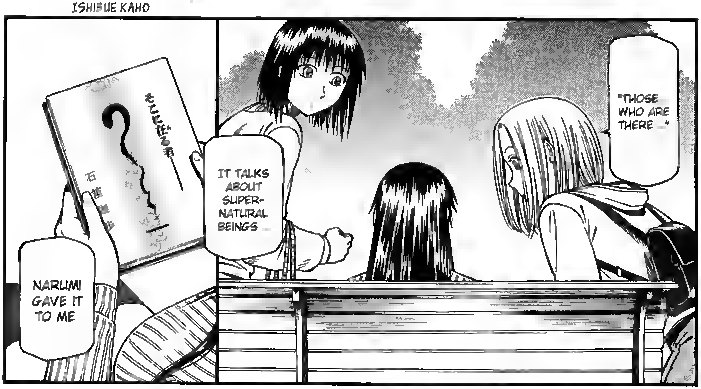
AH, THAT'S IT! I KNEW HE REMINDED ME OF SOME-ONE!!
HMM?
BUT FORGET ABOUT THIS, YOU MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT DINNER!
NANASE OR KAJI PROB-ABLY YELLED AT HIM!
YOU'VE MET ONE OF THE VENERABLE SAGES?
YES, BUT ONLY ONCE...
HE'S EVEN GOT THE HAIR STICKING OUT!
HE LOOKS JUST LIKE THE OLD SENKIOU!
Ha ha ha! Yep. Spitting image!
I HOPE HE'S DOING WELL...
Whimper... Whimper

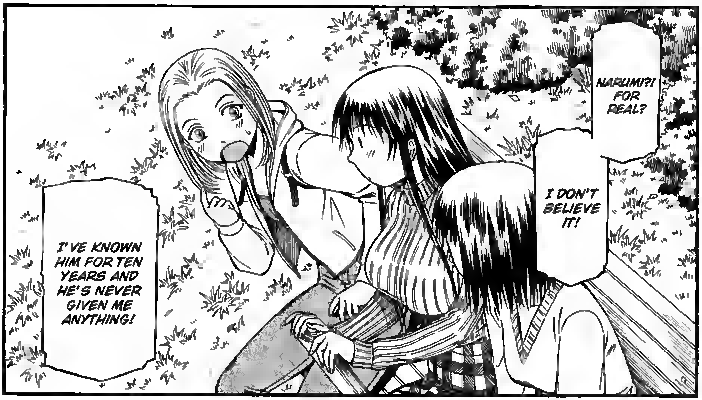
"THIS SUBLIME CREATURE, CLOSELY RESEMBLING A GODDESS, WALKED WITH ELEGANT LITTLE STEPS ..."
"... OVER THE SPARKLING SURFACE OF THE WATER."
"I HAD BARELY EVEN NOTICED HER, BUT MY HEART WAS ALREADY CAPTIVATED."
"I KNEW THAT I WOULD NEVER IN MY LIFETIME, FORGET THAT ENCHANTING VISION."
"THAT'S WHEN SHE LAID HER EYES ON ME..."
"BETRAYING THE SOFT SMILE OF A BODHISATTVA."

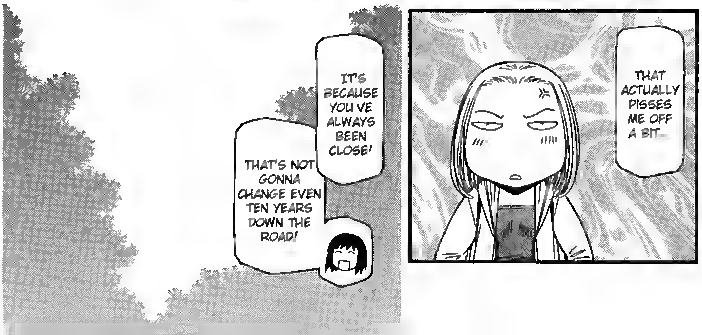
CHAPTER 25
TO LOVE AND
TO BE LOVED

AAAHR!
DON'T EXPECT ME TO LET MYSELF BE CAUGHT...
HR R!
...BY THOSE WORTHLESS N.U.E.!
HR R!
LOOK! THERE ARE TRACES OF BLOOD GOING THIS WAY! HURRY, LET'S CAPTURE IT!
I WANT TO SEE...
HR R!
...AT LEAST ONE LAST TIME...
...THAT HUMAN GIRL!
HR R!

!!
GUESS WHO?!
ORIE!
WAAH!
ARE YOU CLAIR-VOYANT OR SOME-THING?!
WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
I WAS READING A BOOK WHILE ENJOYING THE SUN...
THAT'S SO OLD FASH-IONED!
AT OUR AGE! AND ON A BEAUTIFUL SUNDAY LIKE THIS!
WELL I SAY THAT BUT IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE MUCH BETTER... WE WERE JUST STROLLING AROUND WHILE CHIT-CHATTING


"THOSE WHO ARE THERE..."
IT TALKS ABOUT SUPER-NATURAL BEINGS...
NARUMI GAVE IT TO ME


NARUMI?! FOR REAL?
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
I'VE KNOWN HIM FOR TEN YEARS AND HE'S NEVER GIVEN ME ANYTHING!


IT'S BECAUSE YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN CLOSE!
THAT'S NOT GONNA CHANGE EVEN TEN YEARS DOWN THE ROAD!
THAT ACTUALLY PISSES ME OFF A BIT...

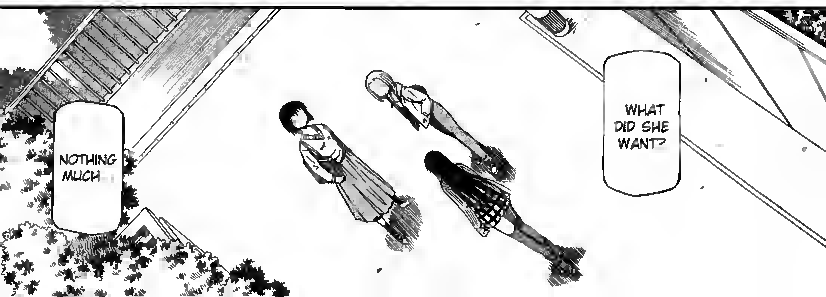
OKAY, I KNOW WHAT WE SHOULD DO!
LET'S GO PAY HIM A LITTLE VISIT!
ALL THREE OF US!
HUH?! RIGHT NOW?!
OF COURSE! IT'S MORE FUN THIS WAY!
YOU'RE COMING, RIGHT, ATORI?
HMM, WHY NOT...
Ding Dong
YEAH!
カチャ

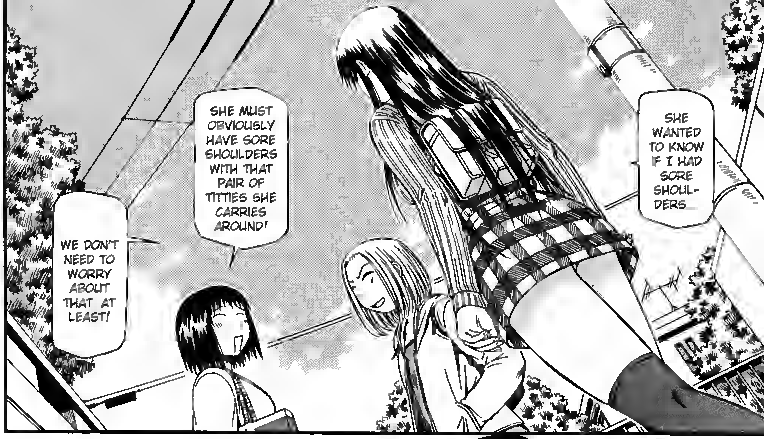
EXCUSE ME.. IS NARU.. UH, IS HARUOMI HOME?
HMM?
!!
Shuuu!
SPILL IT..
WHICH ONE OF YOU IS HIS GIRL-FRIEND?
AH... UH... NO! WE'RE JUST CLASS-MATES!
WE JUST CAME OVER TO SAY HI..

BUT YOU'VE COME AT A BAD TIME. HE JUST LEFT!
DANG, WHAT A SHAME!
WELL, I GUESS I SHOULD BE HAPPY THAT HE KNOWS SOME GIRLS, AT LEAST!
NEVER THERE WHERE YOU NEED HIM, THAT RASCAL!
HE WENT THAT WAY!
べしっ

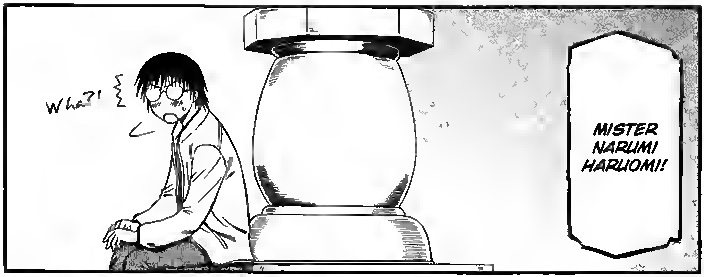
NARUMI
POST
WE'LL TAKE A LOOK... THANKS!
OH, IF THERE'S A SHRINE THERE, THEN I'M SURE THAT'S WHERE HE WENT!
TOWARDS THE TEN-JINBARA SHRINE?

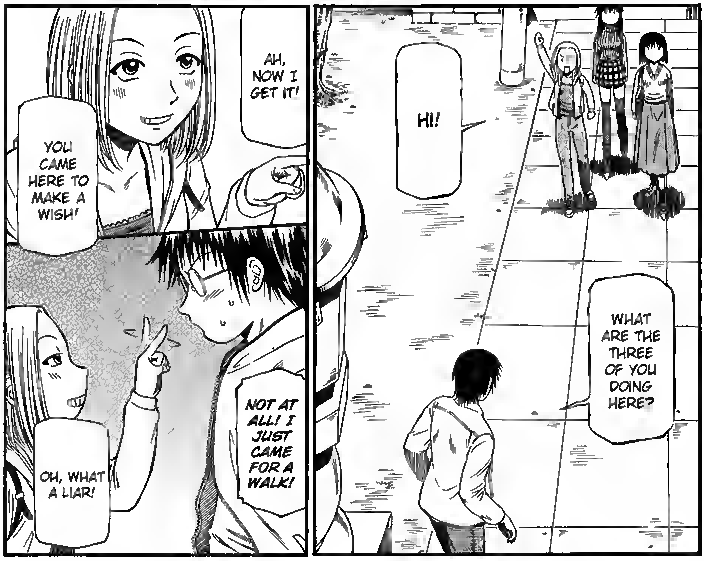
HEY, THE GIRL WITH LONG HAIR!
COME HERE FOR A SEC!
YOUR SHOULDERS ARE OFTEN SORE, AREN'T THEY?
AND TELL ME... DO YOU HAPPEN TO SOMETIMES SEE SHADOWS AT THE EDGES OF YOUR PERIPHERAL VISION*?
* TYPICAL SYMPTOMS OF POSSESSION IN JAPANESE FOLKLORE. THE SPIRITS SUPPOSEDLY STAYING PERCHED ON THE VICTIM'S SHOULDERS
UH... NO... NOT REALLY...
OH, FORGET IT THEN!
PRETEND I NEVER SAID ANYTHING!
HURRY UP AND GO SEE MY BROTHER!


WHAT DID SHE WANT?
NOTHING MUCH


SHE MUST OBVIOUSLY HAVE SORE SHOULDERS WITH THAT PAIR OF TITTIES SHE CARRIES AROUND!
WE DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT AT LEAST!
SHE WANTED TO KNOW IF I HAD SORE SHOULDERS...

All I know is she goes to uni!
How old is his sister?
If you want to know more go read the special at the end of volume 4!
.....
Still I need to be more careful
Right Srr Srr?
SHE MUST HAVE SENSED THE SRR-SRR'S PRESENCE
IT SHOULDN'T BE THAT SURPRISING SINCE SHE'S NARUMI'S SISTER.


Wha?!
MISTER NARUMI HARUOMI!!


AH, NOW I GET IT!
YOU CAME HERE TO MAKE A WISH!
OH, WHAT A LIAR!
NOT AT ALL! I JUST CAME FOR A WALK!
HI!
WHAT ARE THE THREE OF YOU DOING HERE?

NO..
DID YOU KNOW?
I HEAR THE WISHES MADE AT THIS SHRINE ALWAYS COME TRUE!

I'D RATHER ASK FOR ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT JUICY MEAT!
I can already guess their wishes! Things like "I want to meet a handsome guy!"
WELL, PERSONALLY, I DON'T KNOW ANYONE WHOSE WISHES CAME TRUE!
DON'T YOU FIND THE SHRINE HERE STRANGE? I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT FOR A WHILE...
IT'S SO MAGNIFICENT YET NO ONE IS EVER AROUND!
NO VISITORS, NO PRIEST, NO PRIESTESS...
IT'S ALWAYS DESERTED, AND YOU CAN FEEL IT IN THE AIR!
BESIDES, THERE ISN'T EVEN A WELCOME DESK.
SO, TELL ME... WHAT'S YOUR REAL REASON FOR COMING HERE?
AH, YOU'RE RIGHT!

I KNOW THE ENTRANCE IS SOMEWHERE BEHIND THIS SHRINE...
BUT I'M NOT SURE WHERE...
WHAT?!
WELL... ACTUALLY I WANTED TO GO TO N.H.E. HQ...
You went to my place?
ORIE SUGGESTED THAT WE PAY YOU A VISIT...
BUT ONLY YOUR SISTER WAS THERE AND SHE TOLD US TO LOOK FOR YOU HERE...
FINE. AND DID YOU GIRLS WANT TO ASK ME SOMETHING?
It gets on my nerves how my sister is always able to tell what I'm doing...
NOT REALLY. I THINK SHE JUST SUGGESTED THAT FOR NO REASON
WAIT UP, ORIE
WHAT ABOUT YOU? I'M GUESSING YOU DIDN'T COME HERE FOR A STROLL...

DID YOU ASK HI-CHAN? SHE SHOULD BE ABLE TO HELP YOU, SHOULDN'T SHE?
FOR THIS...
COUNT ME OUT!
ボム
WHO KNOWS WHAT YOUR BUDDIES WOULD DO TO A WANDERING DEMON LIKE ME...
...IF I EVER GOT CLOSE TO THEIR PRECIOUS LITTLE HQ!
You think?!
AND YET MS. NANASE PROMISED NO HARM WOULD COME TO YOU...
OH!
ACTUALLY...
HE'S GOT TO KNOW THE WAY!

WHAT'S GOTTEN OVER YOU, ORIE?
I'M GIVING THEM SOME TIME ALONE SOMEWHERE QUIET!
YOU REALLY AREN'T TOO FAST ON THE UPTAKE MY POOR SHOUKO!
ORIE...
ARE YOU SURE...? I MEAN...
WHAT, THOSE TWO?
I ALREADY TOLD YOU

NARUMI'S JUST A CHILDHOOD FRIEND...
BESIDES, I KNOW HIM WELL...
EVERY TIME HE LOOKS AT ATORI, IT'S CLEAR AS DAY THAT HE'S GOT SOME VERY STRONG FEELINGS FOR HER...
ORIE...
AND IT'S OBVIOUS THAT SHE ISN'T COMPLETELY UNINTERESTED IN HIM, EITHER
I'M HAPPY WHEN I SEE MY FRIENDS ARE HAPPY..
I CAN'T HELP IT, THAT'S HOW I AM..
SA

WHAT'S WRONG, SRR-SRR?
.....
DAN... GER...
I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF THIS...
ズズ...
HUH?! IT SPOKE...?!
WHAT IF ORIE AND SHOUKO WENT BEHIND THE SHRINE!
!!

KYUUH!
!
HURRY, ATORI!
HI-CHAN!
SHOUKO!!
ORIE!

HUMANS...
PRETTY LITTLE HUMANS!

GYAAH!
PERFECT! THEY FAINTED... THIS MAKES THINGS A LOT EASIER!

HRR R...
A...YA...
HR RR...
I'VE WAITED IN VAIN...
...BY YOUR SIDE...
...HOPING YOU'D FINALLY TAKE NOTICE...
YOU...

ATORI!
WA...
HHH...

HI-CHAN?
THIS DEMON... WAS CRYING...

A...YA...
I WANTED... TO SEE YOU... SO MUCH...
PRIN- CESS!
HU H?!
IT WAS CRYING?

MINO-KICHI!
OH, BUT IT'S THE YOUNG FRIEND OF THE PRIN-CESS!!
YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE SEEN A WIND DEMON PASS BY, WOULD YOU?
HE HAD POSSESSED THE SOUL OF A YOUNG HUMAN CALLED AYA...
HER PARENTS CAME TO MAKE A WISH AT THIS SHRINE, PRAYING THAT THEIR DAUGHTER BE FREED FROM THIS DEMON.
WE LATER MANAGED TO CAPTURE IT, BUT IT ES-CAPED WHILE WE WERE BRINGING IT DOWN TO OUR WORLD...
APPARENTLY HE'D FALLEN HELPLESSLY IN LOVE WITH THAT GIRL...
JUST A POOR YOUNG LAD MORE THAN ANY-THING...

I WONDER WHAT THE GIRL LOOKED LIKE...
MAYBE LIKE ORIE OR LIKE SHOUKO...
AS SOON AS SHE SAW THE N U E FOLKS
HI-CHAN VANISHED INTO THIN AIR

YES, THAT'S THE GENERAL IMPRESSION I'VE BEEN GETTING
YOU KNOW NARUMI...
HI-CHAN IS VERY ATTACHED TO YOU

THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK YOU GAVE ME ALSO SEEMED SMITTEN BY A BEAUTIFUL CREATURE FROM THE OTHER WORLD...
AT LEAST JUDGING BY WHAT I'VE READ SO FAR...
AND THE DEMON JUST NOW LOVED THIS GIRL SO MUCH
...THAT HE WAS CRYING BEFORE HE DIED...
IT DOESN'T HURT ANYBODY, DOES IT?
A DEMON
...CAN LOVE A HUMAN BEING AND VICE-VERSA, RIGHT?!
ATORI...
ARE YOU ASKING THAT FOR YOUR MOTHER'S SAKE OR IS IT FOR YOUR SAKE?

So that's it... you are...
I..
I DON'T KNOW...
I'M JUST CURIOUS...
!!!
FOR MY SAKE?
Why did I think of "him"?

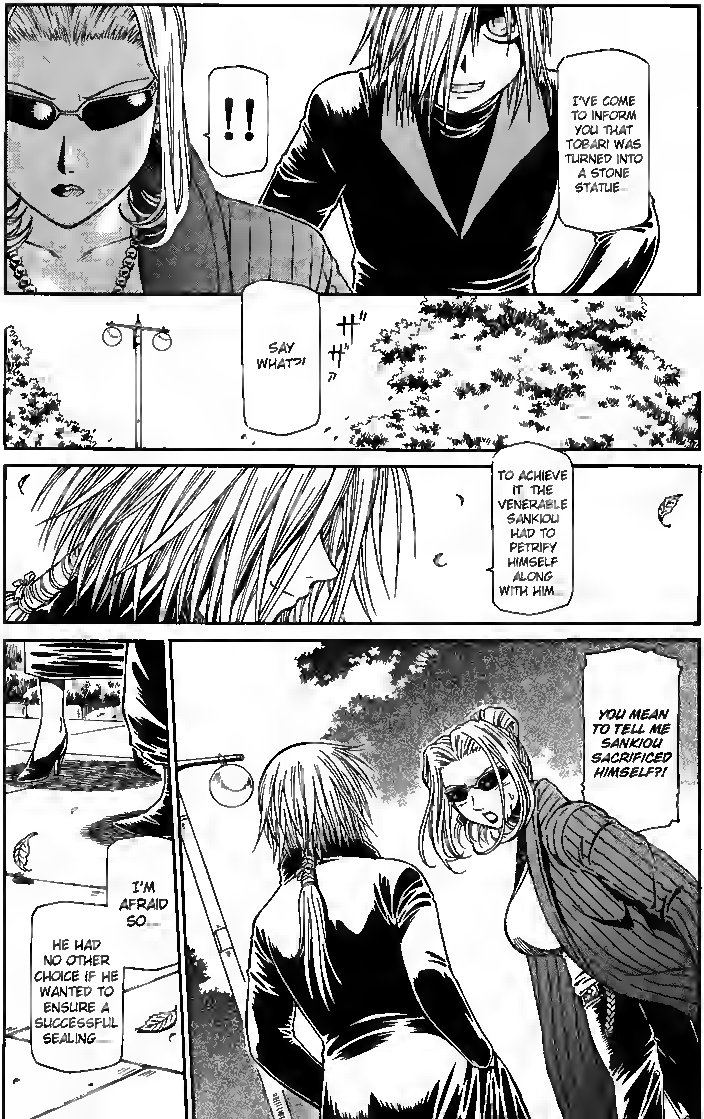
You really are just like the other girls of your age...
In a certain sense, I am relieved...
OH RIGHT!
TELL ME, ATORI...
DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR FATHER?
NO... NOTHING OTHER THAN HIS NAME...
"SHIBA KOUHEI"...
!!
LISTEN
THIS IS ONLY A HYPOTHESIS AT THIS STAGE
BUT I'VE COME TO THINK THAT THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK I GAVE YOU...

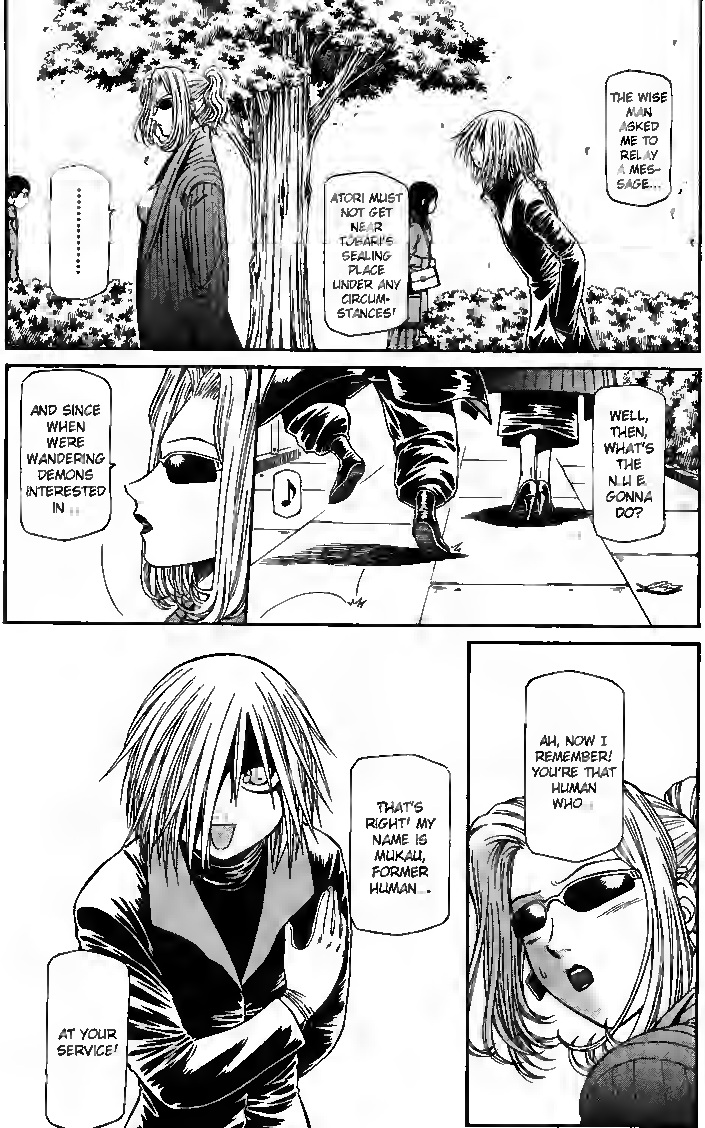
...MIGHT ACTUALLY BE YOUR FATHER..
AND THAT'S NOT ALL
CONSIDERING HIS DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DEMON WORLD, HE MUST SURELY HAVE BEEN THERE! IT FITS IN NICELY!
WRITERS OFTEN USE AN ANAGRAM TO COME UP WITH THEIR PSEUDONYM
ISHIBUE KAHO
SHIBA KOUHEI
AND, IF YOU WRITE HIS PEN NAME "ISHIBUE KAHO" IN ROMAN LETTERS...
YOU CAN SEE THAT IT'S AN ANAGRAM OF "SHIBA KOUHEI"
BOOK THOSE WHO ARE THERE
ISHIBUE KAHO

...could be my father...
ORIE! SHOU KO!
RISE AND SHINE!
So the one who wrote that book...
WELL, THEN I'LL GO WAKE THEM UP!

CHAPTER 26
SPRING SNOW

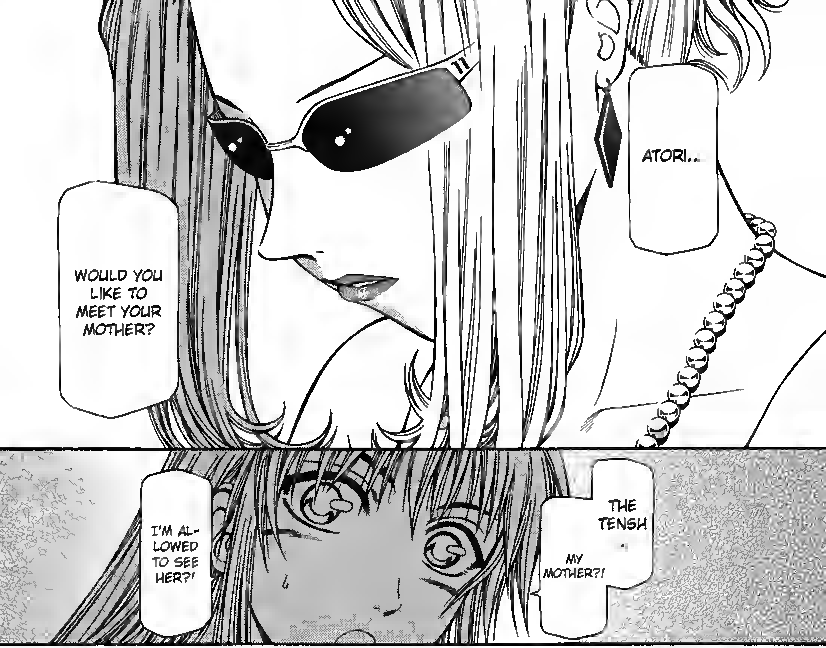
IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, YOU'D BETTER START TALKING!
WELL, WELL, MS. NANASE, I MUST COMMEND YOU!
YOU REALLY DO SEEM TO HAVE EYES AT THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD!
I CAN'T SAY I'M TOO HAPPY TO BE ADDRESSED BY A STRAY DEMON SO CASUALLY...
BUT THEN AGAIN, YOUR MUG LOOKS ODDLY FAMILIAR...
ARE YOU VISITING ATORI?
OH, YOU KNOW HER?
JUST A LITTLE BIT..
A PAIR OF WEIR DOES

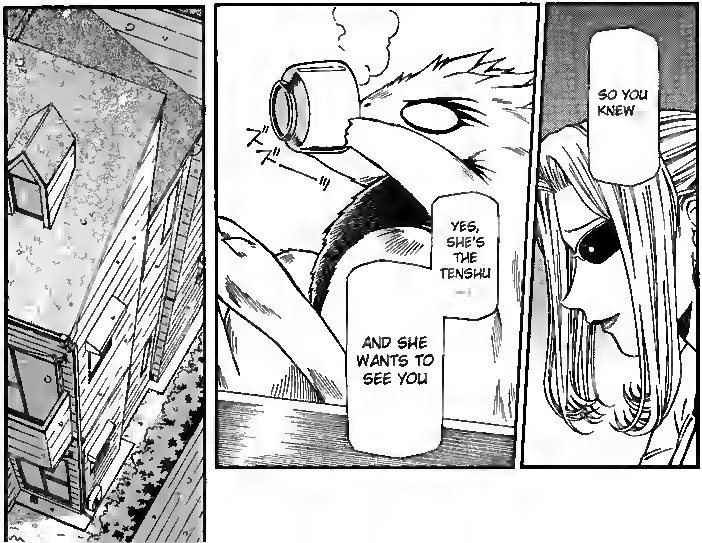

I'VE COME TO INFORM YOU THAT TOBARI WAS TURNED INTO A STONE STATUE...
!!
SAY WHAT?!
TO ACHIEVE IT THE VENERABLE SANKIOU HAD TO PETRIFY HIMSELF ALONG WITH HIM...
YOU MEAN TO TELL ME SANKIOU SACRIFICED HIMSELF?!
I'M AFRAID SO...
HE HAD NO OTHER CHOICE IF HE WANTED TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL SEALING...

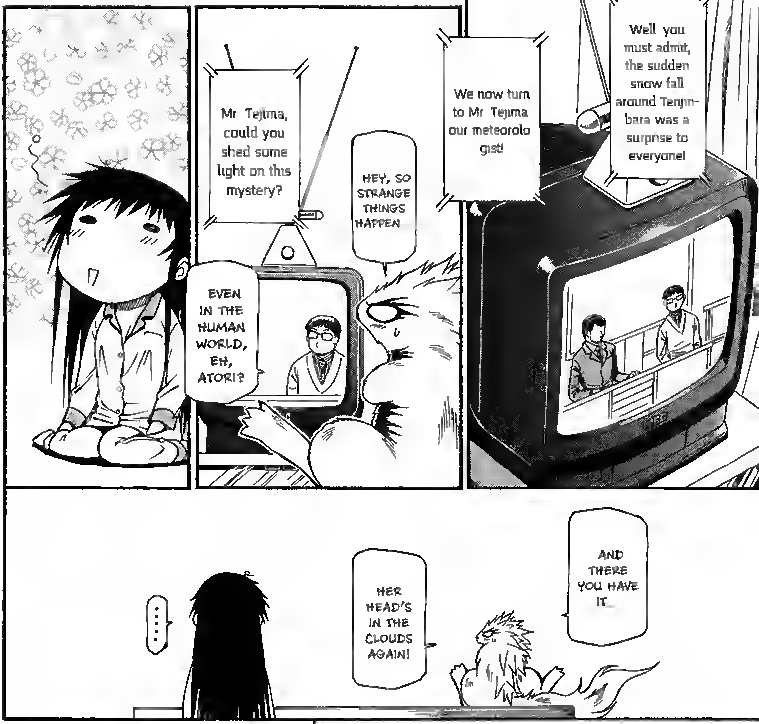

THE WISE MAN ASKED ME TO RELAY A MESSAGE...
ATORI MUST NOT GET NEAR TOHARI'S SEALING PLACE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!
.....
WELL, THEN, WHAT'S THE N.U.B. GONNA DO?
AND SINCE WHEN WERE WANDERING DEMONS INTERESTED IN..
AH, NOW I REMEMBER! YOU'RE THAT HUMAN WHO..
THAT'S RIGHT! MY NAME IS MUKAI, FORMER HUMAN..
AT YOUR SERVICE!

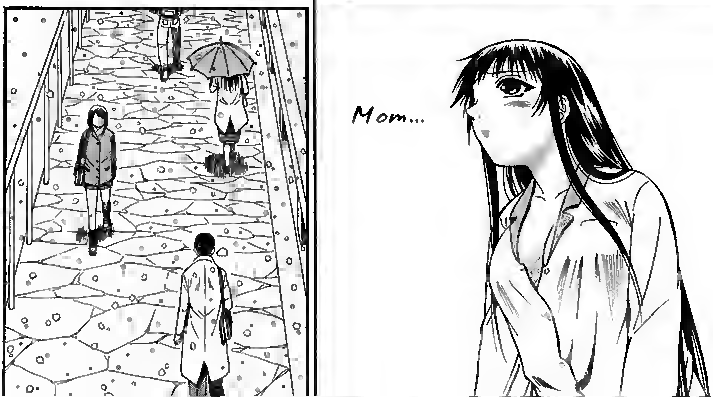
BIP
GROU MF!
IT'S FREEZING COLD THIS MORNING!
SOME TEA WOULD HIT THE SPOT.
カラ
カラ
Pip
Glo Glo!
Pof

I DON'T LIKE THAT AT ALL.
SAME HERE.
MS. NAN-AGE?
GOOD MORNING, ATORI! SORRY TO BOTHER YOU SO EARLY IN THE DAY!
AND YOU ARE...?
WE NEED TO TALK.
GRAB A SEAT.
Ewh-ah!
WHAT'S THE OCCASION?
?


ATORI...
WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET YOUR MOTHER?
THE TENSHI
MY MOTHER?!
I'M ALLOWED TO SEE HER?!


SO YOU KNEW
ズビー
YES, SHE'S THE TENSHI
AND SHE WANTS TO SEE YOU


Mr. Tejima, could you shed some light on this mystery?
HEY, SO STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN
We now turn to Mr. Tejima our meteorologist!
Well you must admit, the sudden snow fall around Tenjinbara was a surprise to everyone!
EVEN IN THE HUMAN WORLD, EH, ATORI?
HER HEAD'S IN THE CLOUDS AGAIN!
AND THERE YOU HAVE IT.


Mom...

After classes, go to the Tenjin'yama shrine...
I'll finally get to meet my mom...

LET'S GO
SEE YOU!
HUH?!
AREN'T YOU COMING WITH US?
WE'RE GOING TO KARAOKE!
I'M OFF, THEN!
NO, SORRY! I'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE SCHEDULED FOR TODAY!

TSK!
TSK!
SPEAKING OF, THE WEATHER'S BEEN KIND OF WACKY LATELY
TSK!

IT'S QUITE RARE FOR HER TO BE IN SUCH A RUSH!
MOREOVER, SHE WAS LOOKING OVERLY CHEERFUL!
DO YOU THINK SHE'S GOT A DATE?
IN THIS WEATHER?

When I told her about it she just burst out laughing!
AH .. HI ATORI!
YOU SEEM TO BE IN A HURRY!
I CAN FINALLY MEET HER!
MEET WHO?!
Her mother?! But that means...
MY MOTHER!
LATERS~
MIYAKO YOU KNOW ATORI?!
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT HER MOTHER?

Think!
!!
ピカ
AAAH!

NNG...
MAG-
NIFI-
CENT
...
WHAT
COULD
BE MORE
BEAUTI-
FUL...
THAN THE
BLOOD OF
HUMANS
SPREAD
OVER A
COVER OF
SNOW...
DON'T
YOU
AGREE,
YOUNG
NUE?

YOU SHALL SUFFER THE WRATH...
OF THE "SNOW MAIDEN"!
OH MY!
I WAS TOO RECKLESS

WELL, YOUNG NUE?!

AAAH!
ALL THE SNOW HERE IS A PART OF ME!
YOU HAVE NO CHANCE OF ES-CAPING!

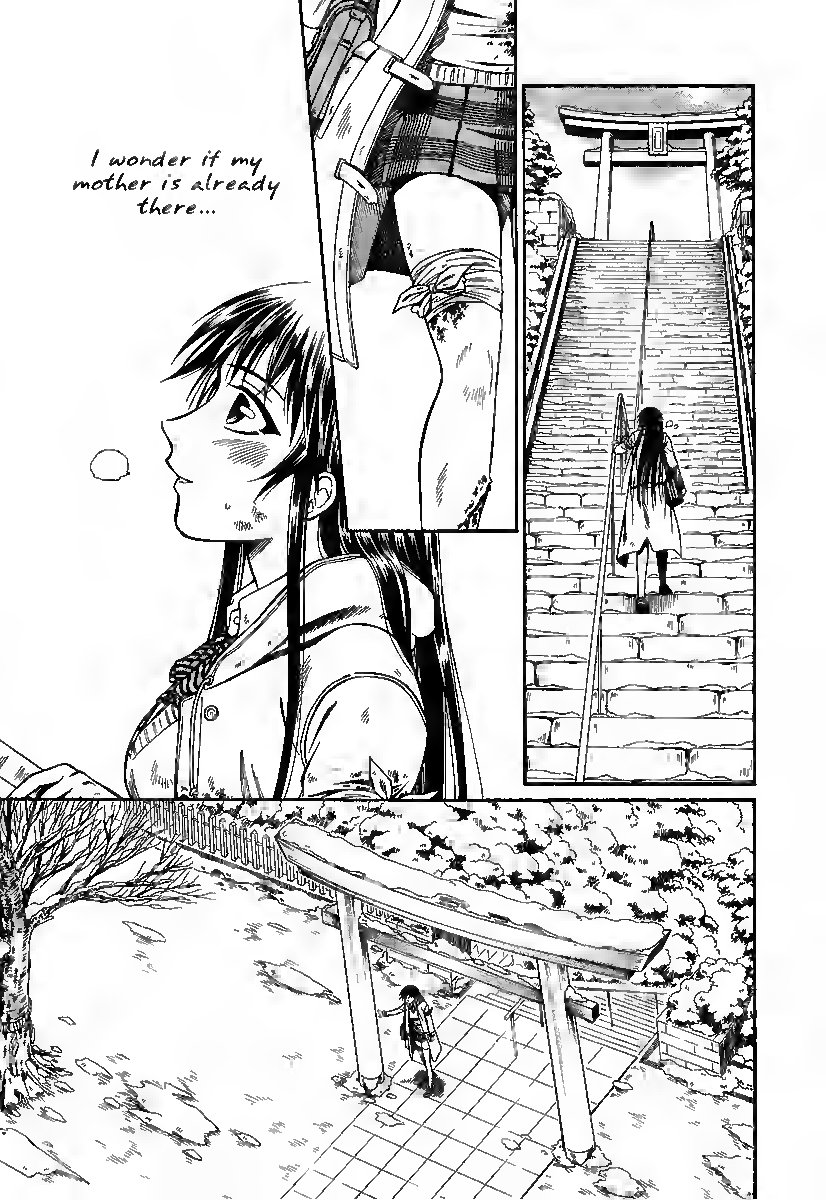
FW UH!
OUMF!!

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS...
SHIT.
PLAYTIME'S OVER...
FEEL MY ABSOLUTE FROSTBITE!
HUH?
WHAT IS THIS?!
Shtomp!

!!
HIII!
HIII!
YOU COULDN'T HAVE CHOSEN..
A WORSE TIME TO SHOW UP!!

KK...
HRRR...
MASTER... TOBARI...
I HAVE FAILED YOU...

... who helped me...
I wonder...
BRR
HAA!
HAA!
HAA!
AHH


I wonder if my mother is already there...

IT'S STARTING TO SNOW AGAIN?

It was completely bare just a moment ago!
A cherry tree... in bloom?!
ATORI!
UHM...
I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT I SHOULD SAY...
ACTU-ALLY...
MOM...

KUMI...
BUT...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
I AM THE TENSHU...
IN OTHER WORDS.. YOUR MOTHER!

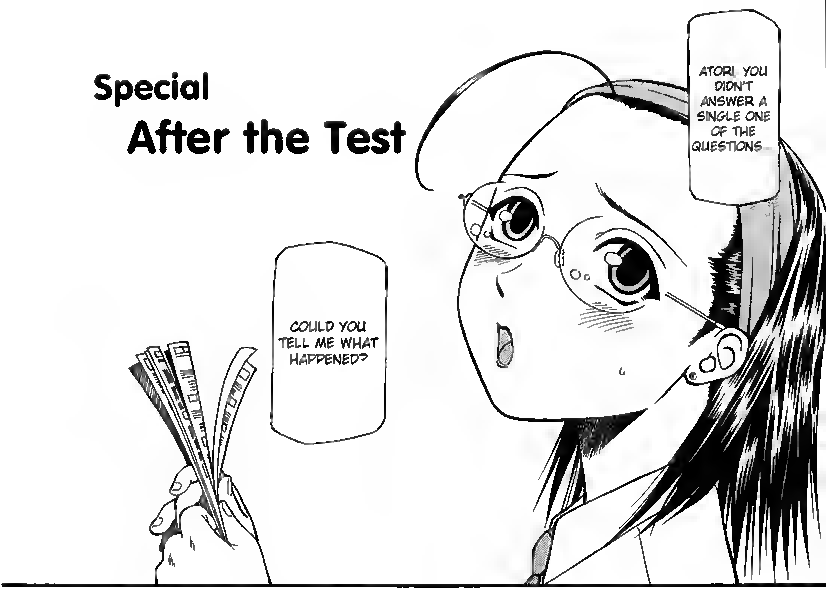
Crazy weather
MUKAI?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
GREETINGS, NARUMI! FUCKING COLD, EH?!
HOW'S HI-CHAN DOING?
SHE DISLIKES THE COLD, SO SHE'S BEEN STUCK UNDER THE KOTATSU ALL DAY!
HAH, NO SURPRISE THERE!
WANT SOME?
Hmmm something smells really good
OH? BAKED SWEET POTATOES?! THANKS!

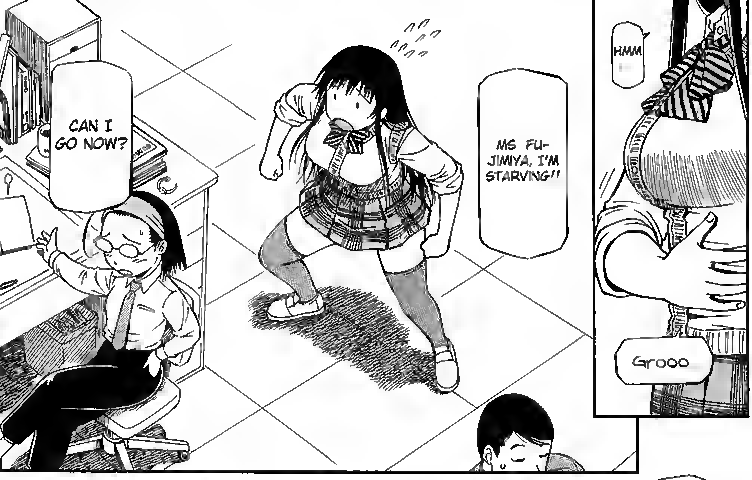
YUM!
AT THIS VERY MOMENT, SHE'S HAVING A ONE-ON-ONE WITH THE TENSHU...
YOU KNOW YOUR GIRL-FRIEND, ATORI...
OH! REALLY?
WELL I'LL BE!
I'M VERY HAPPY FOR HER!
I wish I could also see the Tenhsu...
THIS EN-COUNTER IS LIKELY TO HAVE GREAT INFLUENCE ON FUTURE EVENTS...
AND ON THE DECI-SION ATORI WILL HAVE TO MAKE...

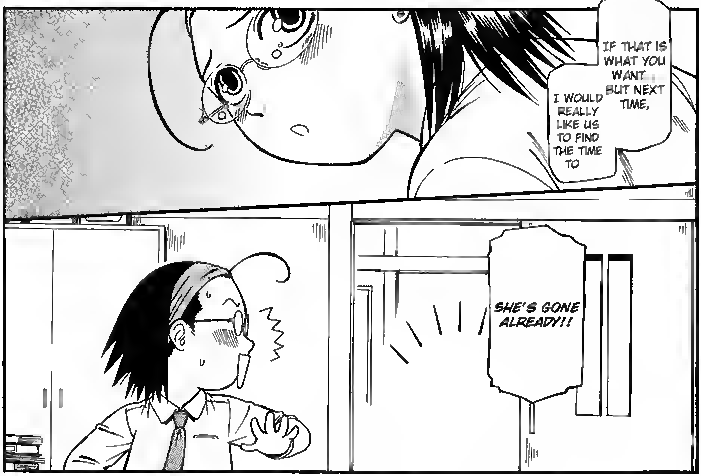
I WILL ALWAYS TREAT HER AS MY FRIEND.
WHATEVER HER CHOICE MAY BE, ATORI WILL ALWAYS BE ATORI IN MY EYES
IF THEY COULD HEAR YOU, I'M SURE ATORI AND HER MOTHER WOULD BE VERY PLEASED!
BUT...
HUH?!
IS SHE REALLY JUST A "FRIEND"?!
OH, RIGHT, I FORGOT YOU ALREADY HAD HI-CHAN!
NOW WAIT A SECOND

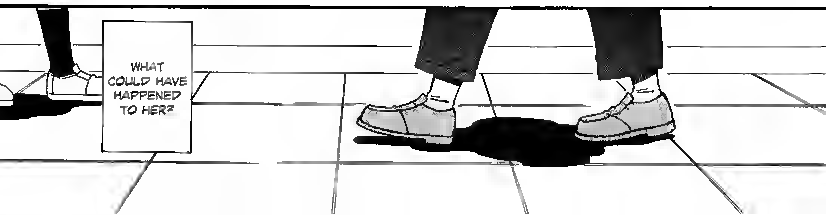
He he he
Fffh!
Such excellent tea!

Special
After the Test




CAN I GO NOW?
MS FU-JIMIYA, I'M STARVING!!
HMM
Grooo


IF THAT IS WHAT YOU WANT... BUT NEXT TIME,
I WOULD REALLY LIKE US TO FIND THE TIME TO
SHE'S GONE ALREADY!!


WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HER?

IT'S ALMOST AS IF SHE HAD A SPLIT PERSONALITY...
HER PARENTS LIVE ABROAD...
Besides a guardian is no replacement for a mother and father...
She must miss her real parents...
?
BUT THEY MUST STILL GET THE URGE TO SEE HER SOMETIMES...
AND THEY LEFT HER IN THE CARE OF HER GUARDIAN...
SO, THERE'S THE INTROVERTED ATORI WHO GREW UP WITHOUT A LOVING FAMILY...
AND WHOSE DREAM IS TO FALL IN LOVE...
AND THEN THERE'S THE OTHER ATORI, SEEMINGLY BROUGHT UP IN COMPLETE FREEDOM, AND WHO ALWAYS DOES AS SHE PLEASES...
I THINK I GET IT! THERE ARE TWO OF THEM, AND THEY SWAP FREQUENTLY!

SO ATORI HAD A TWIN SISTER!!
THEIR PARENTS LOOKED AFTER ONE OF THEM...
AND ABANDONED THE OTHER ONE, DEPRIVING HER OF HER HAPPINESS...
SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING TAKEN OUT OF A DIME NOVEL..
Hm!
But wait, in that case...
Hmm...
Well maybe it's a split personality after all...

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MFコミックス
アトリ抄……5

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メディアファクトリー
MEDIA FACTORY

人間と妖鬼のハーフ、柴馬アトリ。
幼い頃の記憶をなくした彼女は
人に仇なす妖怪を退治することを生業としていた。
始めは心を閉ざしていたアトリだが
人間と妖鬼の多くの友人に支えられ
次第に自分の持って生まれた運命と
向き合えるようになって行った。
突如、妖鬼の世界にさらわれた
アトリだったが
かつて彼女を斬ったミツルギや
敵だったものの
身を挺してアトリを救った
ドウセツの助けを得て
ついに三賢の長・夜伸の下に到着した。

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装幀：多田和博＋岡田ひとみ
フォーマットデザイン・フィールドワーク

ファンタジー

アトリ抄

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五

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